HORATIO HOWARD BRENTON.

A NAVAL NOVEL.

BY

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CHAPTER I.

THERE are some men in the world who so evidently take it for granted that they are to be rich, prosperous, and happy in this world, that no one dares to remind them that riches, prosperity, and happiness are only fairly the result of prudence, integrity, and wisdom. Henry Brenton was one of those men; he wore the finest linen and he drank the richest wines, with an air that seemed to defy heaven and earth to deprive him of his right so to do. But there were occasions when the subject of

ways and means forced itself even on his lordly attention. And at such a period our narrative now finds him. He was no Charles Lancaster to sin only just so far as might afford a friendly heart an excuse for helping him. His involvement was as great as was his disdain of the idea of receiving any assistance. He would help himself. But how?

Every one knows what wild and impracticable ideas occur to a man in difficulties. How at one moment they take the form of a begging-letter, and at another to work day and night without ceasing. Henry Brenton was both too proud and too unprincipled to adopt either of these methods of relieving himself from the pressure of his debts, and he resolved upon another course. There was a woman of somewhat under forty, whom he had known as a child, and who had flirted with him then as a woman of thirty may flirt with a boy of fourteen. He knew that she was wealthy, and he resolved to marry her. He was not blind to the disadvantages of such an action, but he

felt that he had sufficient protection against it in the cold hardness of his disposition.

It was even autumn and the days were chilly, and the tiger-lilies had cast their golden-spotted leaves on the damp garden paths as he entered the wide portals of Brenton Hall. His face was a little thinner than when he had left, his form a little lighter, and the servants thought him vastly improved; but without either awaiting or attending to their criticism he passed hastily forward and went on towards his sister's boudoir. Before he had gone far, he found her standing at the door of the housekeeper's room, and casting his arms around her, he pressed her passionately to his breast. He was human, after all, and he felt for his sister both pride and love.

But what is this? Why does she laugh and struggle and say, 'Charles!' in a half-indignant way till she has got free, and then start and shrink back, and murmur, "Henry Brenton!"

"Yes! I am Henry Brenton! And I thought you were Margaret!"

"No, I am Clara!"

Without saying anything more they walked side by side to Margaret's boudoir, and then everything was explained, but, naturally, neither of them said anything about the mistaken embrace.

Charles Lancaster could never make out how Clara and Henry had become friends in so short a time. It was not his way. Before he formed a friendship he first brooded over it with an anguish of hope and fear, and then held it tight to his heart, as if he feared that every wind that blew would tear it from him. But here were Henry and Clara on terms of growing intimacy already, whilst he was only asking himself why he started if he only heard the utterance of her name.

With respect to the new phases introduced into the life at Brenton Hall by the arrival of Clara, it may be mentioned here, that Margaret having never hitherto had a female

friend, installed Clara in that office, without a moment's hesitation bestowing upon her the freest confidence; and that Clara, having admired Mr. Brenton, senior, for his firmness of character and acquaintance with the great and busy world, found in his son, who so closely resembled him in these points, her ideal of what a man should be.

And Henry Brenton found not in Clara his ideal of a woman, for he had never formed any but a source of sweet and new sensations, which proved exquisitely grateful to his sensuous nature.

So there now took place through the long winter in Brenton Hall, one of those noiseless and almost invisible but desperate struggles which sometimes take place between the strong and the weak, when the former has sworn to conquer and the latter is fighting for life. But everything was against Charles Lancaster, and had he even been equal to his antagonist in subtelty or moral energy, he would from the first have had no chance. By one of those events

which always occur to reveal what we most wish to conceal, Henry Brenton discovered his sister's liberality to Charles Lancaster. Had he acquired the information a few months earlier, his scornful indignation would have known no bounds, but now he frankly told Charles and Margaret, that he had acquired the information, and gave them to understand by look and tone how much it delighted him that his beloved sister should have been able to be of any service to his dearest friend; this was how Margaret understood him, and how any bystander would have understood him. But Charles Lancaster knew his true meaning and felt stabbed to the heart; he knew as well as though the words had been thundered in his ears, that he was imperatively required in honour henceforth to declare himself engaged to Margaret Brenton and never either by word or thought, to indulge his ardent passion for Clara. But he now began almost to rejoice in the little command he had over his own soul, for he felt that no desire of his own could ever

check the manifestation of its feelings—the deepening colour of his eyes as he gazed on her—the dumb language of his palm when it touched hers.

But loving Clara would not relieve him from his embarrassments, and, indeed, deprived him of the only feasible means of satisfying them; for it quite drove away from his thoughts the idea of marrying the young lady, who was forty years of age, who had money, and who admired him. Full of the moody, but by no means despairing thoughts which arose from his debts, he found his chief solace in riding about to the distant quarters of the estate.

And all this time Mr. Brenton, senior, watched what was going on, like the chorus in a Greek play. He praised, and blamed, and often prophesied ill from the deep foreboding at his heart. He began to feel as though there were some fatality, by which he was condemned always to remain isolated in the midst of the busy world, and as though every affection were destined to fall away

from him, as the morning vapour falls away from the hill side when the day grows on apace. And so, thrusting away from his heart, with a remorseless hand, all idea of self, he resolved henceforward only to watch over and protect the happiness he could not share.

He was deeply grieved at the position in which matters stood with the young people. He was far from willing to trust his son with Clara's life happiness; and he saw, moreover, that Charles Lancaster loved her with his first true love. As far as Margaret was concerned, he was so much in the habit of considering her as utterly cold and proud, that he never associated with her any idea of passion or feeling.

CHAPTER II.

HENRY BRENTON'S affairs at length became so desperate, that he could not refrain from brooding over the advantages of marrying the rich, but *passé* young lady. He entertained no idea of marrying her—none in the world; but to do so would be so ready a means of relieving him from all his embarrassments, that he loved to have the possibility always apparent. In the latter part of the winter, therefore, he visited much at Farley Court, and pressed his suit with a kind of haughty impetuosity, exactly suited to attract and

please her to whom it was directed. He had just returned from a long ride with the lady, during which matters had progressed so far, that he experienced great difficulty in steering clear of the point at which it would have been necessary to make some decided declaration; and was standing, in meditative mood, before the blazing wood fire in the hall, when a calm and rather musical voice said, behind him—"You are in debt."

Henry Brenton turned round, without any sign of surprise, and quietly looked at the utterer of this rather abrupt declaration, whom he found to be a middle-aged man, of gentlemanly appearance, whom he recognized at once as a frequent visitor at Farley Court—but of whom he knew nothing, except that his name was Simpson, and that he appeared to be very much in the heiress's confidence. "Some friend of the family," I suppose," he muttered to himself, "whom I shall have either to bribe or bully, to prevent his interfering."

After a slight pause, he resolved on the

attitude he would assume, and said—"Yes, Mr. Simpson, I am in debt."

The stranger gave him one long look, and then, as though he had come to some sudden resolution, replied—"My name is not Simpson, but Montonari; and I think I might show you how to escape from your difficulties, by a pleasanter method than marrying a person against whose appearance your whole soul revolts."

And so the two dark-browed men unfolded their scheme together. Yes! unfolded it together, for Henry Brenton could never be second in aught that was bold and cruel. We are writing a true history and cannot tell what this scheme was but from its results.

"Fly with me! Clara! Let us away! See you not how wide the world is beneath the twilight! Feel we not ever and ever at this hour a longing to speed far—far with those we love? And shall we not obey the impulse?"

Henry Brenton murmured these words as he

and Clara stood together on the terrace of Brenton Hall watching the satin-like lustrous light and shade of a May twilight. He had already put into practice one part of the Jesuit's scheme, and it was now time for the completion of the other.

"Fly! Henry!" was all Clara's reply, but it was accompanied by a sweet little laugh which betokened supreme heart happiness, and thoroughly ignored her companion's proposal.

But from that day she felt a shadow coming over her, slowly isolating her from all who were around her and drawing her closer to Henry Brenton. She was not pained at this, for she loved him truly passionately. But she had been accustomed hitherto to nought but life and happiness; and at the best, she felt this new strange feeling to be as a cloud.

"To fly with him!" she would murmur to herself; and that idea from which she had at first started with such utter surprise, became a constant though unacknowledged guest in her heart.

He with whom she was now dealing, and, unknown to herself, contending, had a dark and subtle spirit; he knew woman's heart well, and never again asked Clara to fly with him. He knew that no word from the lips of the beloved one passes from the loving heart till it has borne some fruit.

May had passed into June, magnificent with light and heat, and the cattle stood knee-deep in the stream beneath the arches of the rustic bridge, and the horse-chestnut trees were lit with all their waxen blossoms, as cathedral altars are with tapers on a fête day, and the summer lightnings played amongst the hills behind the far off windmill.

And all this time Margaret Brenton's life was like the awaking from slumbers when the mind feels that it has some sorrow to bear but forgets, for a moment, what it is. She refused to acknowledge to herself how great the sorrow was. And Charles Lancaster's life was like that of a bird that is too far at sea and has fallen into some vessel's wake, and cannot escape from it.

Sometimes when the soul has grown so accustomed to a state of sorrow that it begins to regard its weight as a necessary circumstance of existence, a sudden thought will come to it that perhaps after all its inevitable nature is but apparent and that by an effort the delusion may be thrown to the winds. Such a revival of hope generally approaches in the garb of some slight physical circumstance, such as the scent of some well-loved flower, or the chiming of a bell, or something that strikes the eye as being peculiar in the disposition of the furniture of a room.

It was afternoon; there had been a shower, but the clouds were now torn into rough-edged fleecy fragments about the pure blue sky; and Charles Lancaster wandered amongst the garden alleys moodily, feeling as though no power could raise him from his despondency. Suddenly a blackbird alighted amidst the green leaves of a spray at a little distance in front of him, shaking down a beautiful miniature likeness of the late shower, and swelling

his black throat against the distant blue. It was the most ordinary circumstance in the world but there was something in it which extraordinarily changed the current of the young man's feelings and made him pause. "How easy it would be, even now," he murmured to himself, "to persuade Clara of the depth and passion of his love, and thus win her to return it!" Then, as one who walks in his sleep he hurried along, with a swift cautious step, searching for Clara.

In one part of the grounds there was an open green plot in the centre of which an ancient cedar stood or rather reclined, for it was bowed almost to the ground by age and storms, and was now supported by a large iron chain to a stalwart post.

And there stood—Clara.

The timid, earnest expression which Charles Lancaster's countenance usually wore in the presence of this girl, had given place now to a stern and almost savage one, and walking straight up to her, directly he saw where she

was, he began abruptly to pour forth his passion. And Clara listened with a smile, for at this season whatever in all the universe spoke of love, her heart attributed to Henry Brenton. And he who spake knew what that glow of happiness meant and grew frantic at the sight. It was like a mirage of sweet waters mocking the traveller's thirst. His vows grew nigh to imprecations, and his despair to curses. And at length his object seemed to be gained, and she whom he addressed grew pale and gazed at him with eyes of the most beseeching earnestness. And her lips quivered. A moment more and he would hear her utter his name if not in accents of love at least in those of passion. That instant of suspense was exquisite happiness. But her lips refuse to speak and it is beyond and not at him that she is looking, and as he turns, there he sees Margaret lying with her head and arm on the slanting stem of the cedar, just in that stage of fainting when fainting is pain, and the cruel anger of his

look revives her, she half rises, all her woman's pride is gone, and she would utter——she knows not what! Perchance, cry aloud in her agony for mercy!

He was stricken with despair at the very moment of the beginning of hope—and no one ever knew how it was, but the polished gentleman, the man of refined education and fine susceptibilities, had, by a few incoherent exclamations, paralysed, almost annihilated, the strong-minded, yet tender-hearted woman, who, even in that moment, would have gloried in sacrificing her life for his love. Margaret Brenton fell almost a corpse, grasping his feet.

At that moment the group became conscious of the sudden presence, as though he had arisen by some dark magic, of Henry Brenton. There he stood—no smile on his lips, no question asked, but a smile of triumph paraded his whole attitude and bearing. He made no attempt to avenge his sister. He felt that his cruel, cold gaze sufficiently crushed the cowering man before him. To see this calamitous

scene, the result of the happiness which Charles and Margaret had snatched when he himself was still alone in his selfishness, was a delight to his bad heart he scarcely liked to own to himself. He drew Clara away, persuading her that Charles and Margaret were best left alone.

This was the first bitter trouble Clara had ever had; for the death of old Sir John had rather been a surprise to her than a pain—rather an awakening to a new world of life and thought, than a forced experience of the mortality of this. But the excitement of what had just occurred made her whole being quiver with pain, and when she paused with her companion on the terrace, and gazed at the far blue of the distance, her heart echoed the words she had once so carelessly heard there—"Let us fly!"

Henry Brenton knew that his moment was come, and he pressed his suit with an ardour which would not be denied. And Clara was about to fly with him, yielding to the mere emotion and fascination of the moment, when something in her lover's look and tone so

forcibly reminded her of the elder Mr. Brenton that all the feelings of respect and gratitude she felt for the latter rose up to repel the idea.

"Then, Clara, I must tell you what I should have told you before. I have joined the Catholic Church. You know what my father's opinions are, and how unlikely it is that he will permit you to marry me!"

Clara knew what Mr. Brenton's opinions were, and that he would both be deeply distressed at his son's change of faith, and most probably refuse, on that account, to consent to their union. But she knew her own power over the stern man, and resolved that the effect of arguments and entreaties should first be tried.

Then the wrath of the violent man beside her was aroused, burning with that white heat which is so terrible that the beholder is grateful for any spark of fire that relieves it. He grasped her hand in his and told her with cruel abruptness, true to his ruthless nature, that he must fly alone then; and he continued to

speak in an over-clear whisper of deeds abstracted, and lands sold, and of craft upon craft that must now inevitably come to light.

I am not writing Clara's story, but my own, and may only say here that Clara fled with Henry Brenton.

The news of Clara's marriage with his son, and the discovery of that son's misdoings, reached Mr. Brenton, senior, pretty nearly at the same time; and from that moment he was as one who has just been roused from a long sleep and is not yet thoroughly awake. There was a questioning look in his eyes and a clutching attitude in his hands.

* * * *

So much have I thought it advisable to insert here respecting events which, although occurring before I was born, had a most vital influence on my own life and fortunes. Their results will appear in the course of my own story, to which, with many apologies to my readers for so long an episode, I will now return.

CHAPTER III.

My mother having found Gosport inconvenient, had removed near Fareham, and the yellow chariot was at the 'George,' ready to convey me to the house. I respectfully, but earnestly, begged the captain to accompany me. He hesitated—"My good fellow, this is all very fine, but we have much to think about; I can spare you, but I have serious duties, which compel me to suspend my visit. And besides, I could not witness your sacred meetings, I should be in the way sadly." And with a very low bow, he added, "I am not yet officially invited." Then he added, "You

have leave for forty-eight hours." Then closed the discussion, and bowed, — off I flew.

Luckily he did not come! How tame, more than tame, to a bystander to witness such intense feeling as was displayed by my mother, sister, and Ellen. The rector and doctor held aloof until dinner time, and their appearance touched even my hard heart.

"Well, Horatio, you have served your time."

"No, I am not nineteen until May, 1813, and by the present regulation cannot pass until then."

"What a shame! No one ever dreamed about age; we had been informed that so soon as you had served six years, you were eligible."

"No, not yet; and it would be of little use, as I have not any title to preferment; we have only once seen an enemy, and had a chance of nibbling. Three great line-of-battle ships took all the credit, which I must say they deserved;

they took the hammering. I never shall forget that *Defiance*. I must join Captain H. some day, they say he is one of our patterns."

How they pulled me about, declared I had grown immensely, and other customary observations, I need scarcely tell, except that it seemed to annoy Ellen, who observed:—

"If you grow much older I shall give you up; you are too big now to require a champion, I shall burn my gauntlets."

"Give them to me, pray do."

"And pray what will you do with them?"

"Answer me—May I one day be your champion?"

"When I resign my trust, I will constitute you my champion; but, Horatio, that will be a day of deep sorrow to you, as well as to myself, and you cannot learn why, until that fatal packet is unsealed."

Charlotte observed that these mysterious packets tended very much to damp our present enjoyments. But Ellen differed, and said, "Not at all, because she believed that it would most materially aid my future interests."

But mamma inquired—

"Why did not the captain accompany you?"

"Duty detains him; and as far as I can understand, he was not properly invited. The chiefs of the ocean are very sensitive of being made nobody, when they condescend to put foot on shore. You must invite him, not send a message by a post-boy."

Every one was astonished that they had all so far forgotten themselves. But the doctor very jocosely said:—

"Mr. Formality there is playing off the great man; I will undertake to set all right, and be the bearer of the invitation—but from whom?" Here was another puzzler.

Mamma observed, "I will send it, I have no scruples." So the note was written, and was to be delivered by the doctor, for I had not then warned them that I had forty-eight hours' leave. He would return that night.

I viewed the party this evening, and thought all very much improved. My mother strong and more decided in character; Charlotte was

growing beyond mere beauty, it was too much the majestic queen to please me. But Ellen was the same perfect creature I had ever known her, tinted, I thought, by a melancholy oppression, as she sometimes contemplated me with a fixed, intense gaze. And yet the mystery could not, she informed me, be dissolved before I was twenty-one, possibly twenty-five! That depended upon her will and pleasure.

Louisa waited to catch me as I went to bed, and crushed me almost in her wild joy. She was more matronly, and had shipped a cap, which spoiled her entirely.

Time is short—so I was up betimes, and inspected the house, to which I was informed much land would fall in, at the expiration of ten years, as a foreclosure on a mortgage not likely to be redeemed was almost inevitable, and was even now to be obtained by some trivial fine which Ellen's lawyer was managing.

The house, originally a mere cottage, was now expanding its wings, and was soon to take another flight—like some corvettes built into donkey-frigates; but, in this case, rising to an

eighty-gun ship, with her fancy galleries over each wing, and a village or barrack-yard behind, with bachelor's rooms, constituting a very large establishment with coach-houses, stables, and offices.

What she was at no one could imagine, for under no present condition could they be tenantable. Could she dream of marrying?—that was a painful thought. To whom would she now resign her liberty? No, she had almost hinted to me that she was barred from marriage—at all events, until I was of age. It occurred to me that she had made some rash vow, and waited with anxiety to see the other party marry, and thus absolve her.

After breakfast, she took me the round of the visitable portion of her acquaintance; and took occasion to made these visits the occasion of bantering me much on my general coldness to young ladies, even some we had just seen with no mean pretension to beauty. But I observed that, with her, and a sister and cousin, I had no room for any interloper. This seemed to please her, and she very drily remarked—

"I have never extracted a promise from you, and will not; but I should like to be consulted—and, by way of warning, I must inform you, that not an individual of the family would recognize any nearer attachment between you and Fanny. There is an insuperable bar; and, therefore, she has been received and allowed to treat you as a sister, and will be so through life. I know that, in many cases, such bars only excite the parties more to *rebel;* but I have better hopes of you."

"Ellen, I never promise heedlessly; but, if you simply assert that I could not honourably marry Fanny in your view, I do promise never to entertain any such idea. I never have loved her more than a very dear sister, and I think my habit of self-command will deter me from losing my heart until I am in a condition to make the person who may prefer me, at all events, happy in prospect. My twenty-fifth year is time enough to think seriously of such an event."

On bidding good night, on the second even-

ing of my short visit at home, I was compelled reluctantly to say—

"I must return to my ship to-morrow early, and, therefore, breakfast before six."

"You shall; Charlotte and I will breakfast with you, and pack you off. Say no more about it."

And, in short, I was at the 'George,' in that yellow-coloured chariot, before seven—called on the captain, and found him dressing for a court-martial.

"Come, Howard, you must breakfast with me. I was almost saying I was uneasy, but I should have been less easy had you stuck to your limited time. I would not, for any consideration, have you absent to-day. It is a most painful case to me. I have refused to deal with it in any shape, or even to hear it related; and you will never, by word or deed, open the subject in my presence. Have you ever been present at a court-martial?"

"Never, sir."

"Then, you must most narrowly watch

every part of the proceeding to-day—after which I must make you read the best works on naval courts-martial. You will then understand that the matter tried is a sealed subject to the members, and any allusion to it in my presence, or any observation from you intimating even a suspicion of any opinion I might form, would not only prejudice my character, but greatly prejudice yours in the eyes of honourable men.

"And now—one of the prisoners is, I understand, your friend, Lieutenant Saumaurez—no remark. Breakfast, Steward."

"I have breakfasted at six; nevertheless, I shall be glad of a cup of tea to keep you company, sir."

"Thank you, Howard—I feel the compliment. Never forget that any kind of refusal clogs the wheels of good fellowship, provided the object is reasonable; not a drinking bout, or drunken carousal—that degrades. Those *pseudo* friends must be avoided."

At nine I was on board, as barge midship-

man, another 'mid' taking the boat back; indeed, I was merely in charge *pro formâ*.

The court was formed of one admiral and six captains. The prisoner was Lieutenant Saumaurez. The court was duly sworn, and I now found that each member solemnly swore that "he would not reveal the vote or opinion of any member of that court, unless thereunto required by act of parliament," &c.

The charge against the prisoner was—that he, the said Lieutenant Saumaurez, had disobeyed the lawful written commands of his said captain — had exhibited symptoms of cowardice and disaffection before the enemy; and, contrary to the rules, customs, and regulations of the naval service, had been present at the mess-table, as the superior officer, when the orders of his captain had been ridiculed and commented on, and that he had not in his person and place used any means to prevent the same, but had, moreover, countenanced, by certain expressions, the said disaffection. Finally, that he had, unbecoming

the character of an officer, denied being present at any such offences, and concealed the same."

I regretted to observe that commanders and lieutenants made themselves very conspicuous in aiding the prisoner, particularly upon the points of mess-table discussion. And I noticed the president and captains taking notes, and passing very significant bits of paper, which some pocketed, others tore to the minutest shreds.

His captain prosecuted He was very mild—bland—and very much distressed. He seldom asked a question but to the point. Every fact was clearly and distinctly proven—and every one wondered that the prisoner could persist. Still his knot hung around him—no egress was permitted on that side—so that each had to pass behind the president; until at length the president, after a written paper was handed in by the officer of the court, ordered three officers to withdraw under the charge of the officer of the guard.

The defence would occupy four hours; that was granted, and the court cleared. It was thought that they would adjourn—but this they did not appear to incline to, as I found, by my orders respecting the barge, *confidential.*

The court re-assembled. The prisoner read his defence, descanting much on the mode by which the captain gained his evidence (viz., by the master-at-arms and serjeant of marines, and servants), which set forth that such open defiance of authority tended to mutiny, by its becoming, through the servants, the general topic on the lower-deck. The master-at-arms had ventured, confidentially, to tell Mr. Saumaurez, the first-lieutenant, and the latter had ventured to threaten him with his vengeance. The prisoner submitted to the honourable court, that the conversation at the mess-table was not cognizable at a court-martial, and that no proof had been adduced, excepting by servants, that he was present, heard, or joined in, the remarks; and that, if he had, without such *direct proof*, the captain was

bound to believe him in preference, and had, indeed, grossly insulted him by these proceedings. He had witnesses ready to substantiate all he had asserted.

The court was cleared, and in a few moments re-assembled, ordering "*lights*, and to send the barges' crews for their suppers." The knot held together apparently in triumph—little did they suspect the mine!

"Prisoner," said the president, "you will call your witnesses."

Lieutenant —— sworn—deposed that he was present when the conversation, stated in the charge, took place—was sure that the prisoner, although present, did not hear it, and never heard him make any remark.

Prosecutor.—"Did the master-at-arms report the *lights* at that moment?"

"He did."

"That you recollect?"

"Yes—perfectly."

"Did the prisoner or you go to the rounds?"

"The prisoner ordered me. He remained."

The president bowed to the court, "I think he may retire"—all bowed.

"Officer of the court! all witnesses to be kept asunder under charge of a separate sentinel."

"Now, prisoner, it is getting very late, be kind enough to name those on whom you rely to rebut this particular charge, as the others may be permitted to retire until the court adjourns."

"I have only three other lieutenants, and the marine officers."

"Separate those officers. Call the third-lieutenant."

Sworn.

"What are you prepared to depose, sir?"

"That I was present, sir."

"It is my duty to warn you that you are not compelled to criminate yourself. You can now proceed."

He faltered, did criminate himself, and retired. The others, having been closely watched and guarded, did the same.

"Have you any more evidence—any as to character?"

"None but Captain Lofty."

"Do you call upon Captain Lofty?"

"Yes, sir."

Captain Lofty stood up, addressed the president, and said—

"I always give my officers their full merits on paper; I decline committing myself beyond. Whatever I have written I will substantiate."

The Prisoner.—"I have nothing more to say, I rely on the evidence adduced. I feel deeply impressed with the consideration which this honourable court has given to my case; and I fear that I have occupied much valuable time. But when the high professional character which I bear, having served with credit under one honourable member of the court, is taken into consideration, I trust that I shall leave this court with a reputation rather increased than diminished in your estimation."

He then placed his defence and certificates

before the judge-advocate, who took charge of them, and the court adjourned to deliberate.

Even I, a lad, could read the mind of every officer of that court, and of the further mischief brewing. And yet the friends of the prisoner crowded round him, and in the hearing of the prosecutor (who walked the middle deck alone!) I could hear them say—"You must be acquitted."

Short were their dreams. The court opened, there was a disposition for a rush.

The President.—"Keep the court clear."

Officer of the court.—"All the young officers on duty."

I was ushered in with others and formed behind the president.

"All the witnesses and the three officers under charge on the right with the prisoner's adherents."

First a note was read by the judge-advocate from the officer of the guard, and transmitted to the court through the officer of the court, complaining of three officers by name with

having obstructed him in the prosecution of his duty, after refusing them communication with witnesses. The officer was called and informed that a full complaint in writing was to be delivered immediately, before the court dissolved. He delivered it at once to the judge-advocate, it was handed to the president; the court cleared, read the letter, and the three officers were committed by the president's warrant for contempt, to await the pleasure of the Admiralty. The witnesses were mustered by name, and the sentence then read.

The first charge proved—although not coming within the act of cowardice—all the others proved.

Before passing sentence, the president observed—"It is my painful duty to observe that this court cannot but remark on the awful position in which some of the witnesses most wilfully have placed themselves. Punishment is not within its province. And further: the court cannot forbear giving it as their opinion, that much of this results from the marked

injudicious participation, they would almost call it, of the prisoner's personal friends.

"And now, prisoner, after a most patient trial—one in which the court trusts it has afforded you every assistance, it is my bounden duty simply to pronounce, not its sentence only, but that which the offended laws of your country alone dictate. It is my painful duty to pronounce, That you are dismissed His Majesty's service, and rendered incapable to serve in any place or office in the naval service of his Majesty, his heirs, and successors; and you are hereby so sentenced accordingly."

The prisoner bowed deep. "I acknowledge the justice of my sentence."

Then turning round to his clique.

"Fools that you were to deceive me!"

He caught my eye.

"Oh, Howard! will you forgive me? Will you apologize to Captain Lofty?—you know my meaning."

"I do."

"Would he receive a letter?"

"Try."

CHAPTER IV.

When the court had broken up, the captain accompanied me home. He was very low. It was late, and Salmond and Dr. Reed joined us in the evening. We then learned that the *Amelia* was to sail on Monday, three days hence. The captain excused himself, ran to the admiral, who had sent for him, and rejoined us.

"All right; make your arrangements—we have no time to spare. I shall be absent forty-eight hours—possibly less. Have all ready Sunday evening, and all letters here." Turning to me—"Now, Howard, the carriage is ready."

His servant packed his portmanteau under the seat, and we reached Fareham, or rather Portsdown Range, in time for tea, which they had purposely deferred, thinking we might be mad enough, as the doctor reported at dinner, to run away from the court-martial.

The reception of the captain was most affectionate. Ellen received him almost as a sister—too openly to admit of his being an admirer.

He was as much a child in that wonderful woman's hands as myself!

The fun of the evening was soon marred by the news of our early departure, and the unexpected question which the doctor put to me as to the fate of Saumaurez.

"Knew it," he observed; "only wonder he had escaped so long."

I frowned very painfully, and he would not take my hint, until he asked, "Are you unwell?"

"No, but I want your advice; your fee Ellen must settle."

He laughed, consented, and we retired. I then informed him how he was torturing the captain, being one of the members.

"Right!" he exclaimed; "we civilians never dream of your martial laws. I will not offend again. Come along," and we returned. "Wants your advice most, Ellen," he replied. "Mine? oh, he shall have it;" so we retired, when I also put her on her guard, and also to find some more interesting subject for conversation.

We passed the remainder of the evening most agreeably, and, but for the interest which I suspected to exist for a party absent, I should have imagined that the captain and Charlotte were making desperate love to each other. But knowing what I did, and guessing what I did, I did not fail to discover that Captain Lofty spoke to Ellen through Charlotte, and that Charlotte was thinking of Captain Noble, while she flirted with his friend. She had not, it is true, made any enquiry after Noble, but I could perceive the keen attention with

which she regarded any allusion to him. I asked the captain if he had heard of him.

"Not lately," he replied. "I had letters, requesting me to direct to him at Jamaica. He expected to finish the affair with Lord Cochrane, at Basque Roads, from which he would go direct to the West Indies."

I had now seen the colour come and go too unmistakeably to admit of further doubt; and I thought that Ellen looked rather severely at me. Still all was surmise, and the conversation of Captain Lofty might have produced the very same results.

The rector and doctor had very little to say, and my mother appearing to require excitement, I dropped on the sofa beside her.

"Well, you truant, off again on Monday; really the pain of meeting and parting far exceeds the pleasure resulting from such flying visits. But another year will, I trust, afford you time to spend at least a month with us, and I may then be induced to find you more

entertainment than my present low spirits can afford. I should much wish your next visit may be to the rectory, and that you may be able to travel to your father's and grandfather's old property, and look into the rights by which the present occupiers hold. I recollect some very strong remarks made by your late father, that he had not damaged your rights, if you succeeded to one particular estate, which would carry the others; but we must patiently await the terms of law, and the will I fancy also of your guardian angel. When do you quit us? Captain Lofty, when do you purpose that Horatio shall depart?"

"On Sunday night he must be at my lodgings, or before seven on Monday morning. I will give him breakfast. I must return to-morrow night myself, before eight."

"You have only to intimate your wishes here, and they will be obeyed; we are now too well aware of the calls upon your time, to be so selfish as to ask for more indulgence to us than to other friends. But I must ask, as

a favour, that, where time is so precious, you will make the most of it, by coming—as I think you must be aware, will always confer the favour on us (should we not be able to send an invitation)—as a privileged friend."

"Indeed I will, madam; but I had very urgent business and reasons, as well as a dislike to intrusion, at critical moments, when I made that unfortunate speech to Horatio. I have, I hope"—turning to Ellen—"sufficiently explained my meaning, and she will satisfy you I was right."

"I will," she replied, "at a more convenient time."

We met at breakfast, after which Captain Lofty, Ellen, and myself, with the doctor, sallied out to Fareham, to call upon some professional friends, and to enlarge the list—as he termed it—of my future patrons. But few of the naval men were at home, as the ladies observed—'This court-martial has carried them all to town.' All seemed to think the prisoner deserved worse. Not one pitied.

Women seldom do, I have noticed, if want of courage and mischief-making are clearly proved. But there was worse stirring, they hinted; and, when we were on our journey home, Captain Lofty seemed to be very happy to be away, and hinted at sailing on Sunday evening, or before any flags could detain him on Monday morning.

"So much mischief does one bad sheep breed, my Horatio," said Ellen to me, as we were left alone at home, "I am not astonished now at your spirited defence of your captain against, if I recollect, this same officer's slanderous insinuation to our curate."

"The very same, and yet he had the impudence to talk of *his own professional character*, and the meanness to vaunt of serving under Captain Lofty, and to call upon him to support his character!"

"Impossible, Horatio!"

"Too true; and the captain simply referred the court to the written testimonials which he had given him, and which he was prepared to justify"

"Indeed, Horatio!"

"Yes; but he had none but the plain service one. Still, many captains do foolishly go beyond the truth to help a man forward, believing him better than he merits, and Captain Lofty might have so committed himself. His crimes might commence only at the period, and for which, he quitted. But crimes proved are seldom covered by common certificates. It might have been more merciful, if Captain Lofty had punished this gentleman by court-martial, on the admiral's rebuke at Halifax. Allowing him to leave his ship with a certificate, was in itself a recommendation to another captain. Pluming himself on his self-assumed importance, he joins Captain Noble, who, weaker still, gives him another—deceives the profession, and eventually is the cause—*mark my words*—of the absolute ruin, not only of himself but of twelve of his own or higher rank! Is not Captain Lofty right in fleeing from such scenes?—for if ever boy read the faces of men, the court has doomed

all the parties directly and indirectly engaged —'injudicious friends' to solace him for the remainder of their days in very quiet retirement!"

"Why, you horrid little prophet!"

"Such would I expect to meet, if my name went to London under the fatal letter of that court."

"How dreadful! and yet you glory in the service."

"Yes, my dear Ellen, you congratulate yourselves when your gardener wheels out barrows full of weeds. Never will our service maintain its noble character, unless the ignoble are removed. I am not an advocate *for* punishment. Let every man fill his position let him possess the stipend he has earned; but, beyond all, let him not sully the stream in which we small fry are to sustain ourselves, at the expense of those who are not strong enough to avoid such dreadful influences or opinions, as were attempted to be vindicated before that court-martial. Better remove the

weed as Captain Lofty or Captain Noble should have done, and not wait until it had spread its roots, so deeply as to confound many others with it, and injure good plants. It is even possible the most guilty will escape. But I cannot but believe that some generous feeling blinded some of the twelve I can count as implicated. By the post, to-morrow, no less than twelve persons, will, in all probability, lead a quiet life on half-pay! Opinions so publicly manifested in a bad cause made me shudder, and I momentarily expected (even if illegal) stronger measures—eleven now are under ban of martial law. How many under impartial, or simply named as 'injudicious,' do ask Dr. Howard to tell you, for my information at some future day. Well did Captain Lofty wish me to be present—never shall I forget it. It will very much influence my notion of what is, and what is not, mercy. It will warn me how to put my signature to any document which, at any moment, I may be asked to maintain. How

I wished to have had my good schoolmaster here. But it would have driven him mad; this case out-herods Herod.

"Well, Ellen, even you must perceive how this case bears on the happiness, the comfort, the well-being of not only our profession, of our feelings towards each other, but on the general confidence among officers. How fortunate this case has been adjudged by seven of the finest characters in our service, and the point so frequently cavilled at, settled now and for ever. But look at home—look at the misery resulting from the act of this firebrand! How many families will be distracted directly and indirectly, aye, wherever he has associated, by the possibility of pollution. How many parents, relatives, and children, perhaps, at home, will feel the effect of the expression, even of disapprobation, throughout their generations! It is awful to contemplate! Justice is blind, and cannot see the road to mercy!

"Let us suppose a case. First, Andrews, one of the injudicious friends, finds himself instead of

being first-lieutenant of a splendid frigate, enjoying the confidence of a warm-hearted, gallant captain who let him have his own way, and who would have exerted his utmost interest to get him promoted, meets his captain on his quarter-deck on Saturday at noon. The captain is moody—has a cloud on his brow—and such a brow—changed from a lamb's to that of a lion! He attempts to speak to his Captain, he is stopped by—"I regret, sir, that our intercourse, public as well as private, must cease. There is your discharge, ordered by the Admiralty, your successor will relieve you in a few minutes, and I am ordered to remain on board until you quit." The guard-boat now returned bringing the successor: the late officer got into that boat almost unnoticed, and the frigate proceeded to sea. No one pitied him! The disapprobation of that exemplary, kind-hearted, and deeply-agitated captain who could scarcely go through his part, is electrically communicated to all hands. No soul volunteered a cheer, and yet no one knew

why. An hour before he was cheerfully obeyed; he was now as one who had tumbled overboard! He went to London, endeavoured to see one of the sea Lords—he was not at liberty, never was seen—entered the merchant service, and may be now still a lieutenant pining in want and misery, and his children, instead of being brought up for admirals, possibly before the mast! Now this is but a parallel of what may happen on Saturday next (and has been in reality!)."

"And yet, Horatio, you serve?"

"I do, because no honourable man can meet such a fate. The really good men fill up these gaps, and in time we shall be refined; *the rough sailor boys* will go to merchantmen, and we shall have that saying well appreciated—'A gentleman, and every inch a seaman.' This, my dear Ellen, is my particular reason for wishing to know the fate of all those officers. I wish to know whether my young ideas have been justly formed.

When I am older I may point my tale without names to establish facts; I may save some erring messmate by my advice. But if I busied myself now I should be deemed as having some party view. I might justly, perhaps, share their fate; I must only learn hereafter whether I am harsh or not in my judgment. You can learn all, and from you I need not say how sweetly advice comes!"

"And so we are to lose you, on Saturday?"

"Yes, and I should not be surpised, on Monday morning, to learn that Spithead was deserted. For they would not like to pursue further trials under the same members, and some few may show their true colours and think madly wish to fall martyrs to the cause. I could collect as much before we left the guard-ship. One intimate friend of our captain, a gallant old blade, will lose his first, that I am sure of, every hair of his beautiful shaggy eyebrows told his mind. How lucky none of our officers were there."

And now Captain Lofty returned, observing,

"What can you two serious mortals be about.?"

"Why, Horatio, you will assume the admiral before you are a lieutenant, if do you not shake off those ominous looks. I have just learned that Noble has fought a gallant action in the West Indies, been promoted in the ship he has captured, and Fitzjames, slightly wounded, is now his first lieutenant, and behaved so well that the admiral intends to promote him, if the Admiralty do not, before any of his own followers. Come, youngster, I see you want to speak, and, therefore, I command it shall be so."

"Indeed, Sir? and regardless of the import, you forgive me?"

"I do."

"Then Fitzjames owes all to having served under Captain Lofty, and to the possession of a certificate such as few officers can exhibit."

The captain turned deadly pale—hesitated, and the blood returning to his cheeks with

the pride which helped to render his eyes unnaturally brilliant returned the fire.

"Not more than he deserved, sir! Every labourer is worthy of his hire. But I think I see a flag—a white flag—on that tree. Oh! it is a lady's handkerchief. Can you read the signal, Howard?"

"Oh! yes, sir, I make it out."

Tame lions are not to be trusted too far.—So pretending to overhaul this flag of truce I sallied forth to meet Charlotte.

"Such news, Charlotte! come along we must take a cruise, and see Ellen's fortifications or barracks. Captain Lofty informs us that Noble has taken a frigate or post-ship, been promoted into her, and Fitzjames is his first lieutenant."

"Indeed, Horace how fortunate, not hurt I trust."

"Oh, no!—all right. But, Charlotte, you do not seem to rejoice."

"This fighting, dear Horatio, is a serious business. One must feel a little. And your

friend Fitzjames, is he safe too? You know, I must write, and that instantly, to Fanny to tell his brother the particulars."

"Well, he is scratched, they say, but not to signify. You must be quick to save post."

I plainly saw that there was more in it than merely writing to Fanny. She had no inclination to walk longer, and betook herself to Captain Lofty, who unrolled his budget as she committed all to paper, blushing most exquisitely, but seen only by me, on whom she did not deign to cast a glance.

Well, I thought, if it should be so, what can I have to say? I would prefer Noble to Lofty—one would be a sister, the other a step-mother. True, we were getting daily more intimate, but mind governs— he was in the clouds, I was content with earth. How is it that good men—the models of those we associate with—are, from no fault of their own, beloved, respected, admired, and yet they are so cold that we are afraid to handle them? Their good deeds are hidden, but,

oh! how the wicked rejoice, if they perceive some stitch gives way which may expose the imagined blemish beneath!

"Come, Horatio, you must pack this letter off for Fanny!" exclaimed Charlotte.

"Have you room for a note to the curate?"

"Oh, yes!—here is my writing-case at your service—quick! sit down—not a moment to lose! Come, Horace, prepare the boy with the pony."

Well, thinks I to myself, here is another flaw of wind; there seems to be something doing in the direction of the Rectory. Plenty of time yet. But I have heard—ay, and Noble repeat it, too, now I recollect—that two good eyes, well served, will make a treaty or carry a fortress, when others are groping in the dark. I am determined to try once more; Charlotte will never leave me to find out I am too late—but women are very cunning, and *sometimes* very timid.

Rushing in now for the letter, I met Charlotte with it in her hand. She snatched up

her bonnet quite in different spirits, packed the boy off, and we resumed our cruizing ground off Ellen's redoubt. I inquired the meaning of all this haste in this house; but the only reply was that if it never became useful to me, that Ellen might, perhaps, set up a nunnery, and preside in the palace as Lady Abbess.

"But what have I to do with it?"

"Yes, there is the mystery! Everything is palmed off on you or me. What sins we may have to bear, by-and-bye, I know not; but they are not likely to arise from want of hospitality, for it is now well ascertained that she has the command of any sum she pleases to give to charities, &c., but never in her name—it is always Howard. Oh! Horatio, what a blessed life that woman has led!—and no tongue but blesses her! Who will she marry? What a fatal day to us! But of this she never allows any one to speak. There is some deeply-hidden mystery—even mamma cannot solve."

"Well, but, Charlotte, who is it you are going to marry?"

She turned such a sweet, honest look upon me, that I was ashamed to have asked the question.

"I marry, Horatio, and never ask your opinion! I am hurt—indeed, I am; but I will so far let you into my secret that I intended, as you may be some time absent, to put certain queries before you to-night, after the party separates, which puzzle me, and may possibly lead to such an event at some distant period. But it must be under such strict confidence as a brother only can be admitted to. My eye has been on you as acutely as, I think, you have watched me; and, if I mistake not, I have puzzled you not a little, you torment!"

So we marched home, dressed, and appeared at dinner.

CHAPTER V.

After dinner, the captain, leading me quietly out of the room, informingme that "as early on Sunday as I could leave, the better it would suit him."

"Have yon any bills to pay? Tell me without reserve, and my clerk will execute your commands."

"Thank you, sir; my marine and hammock-man, six months in advance, and any bills the former has incurred for me. The clerk will also know the mess contribution."

"That is right, my good fellow! Why,

you have an older head on your shoulders than I had at your age."

"Yes, sir; but possibly you had no Ellen —no captain—no first-lieutenant—no Fitz-james—to help you along the rough road."

"True, I had none of these. I once thought I did wrong in permitting you to come a year too soon; but I find it was not so."

"On that decision, probably, my fate hinged. If I had not left school at that moment, I might have been ruined!—disgraced."

"Indeed! you must tell me that important incident some day. I have no time now. Say all kinds of honest things for me, for I cannot."

He shook my hand warmly, jumped into the carriage, and was off.

When I entered the room, they inquired for the captain, and 'Gone' caused as much uproar as if I had thrown a hand-grenade amongst them. Gone! Gone! Gone! Gone! in four very different unharmonious tones, resounded very much unlike the tuning-fork,

and the result was as silent as that piece of cold steel.

"Yes, *gone!* He could not brace himself up to a parting. He asked me to say 'everything honest' for him, and I am sure you will accept his apology."

"Well," said Ellen, "I think in a Christian spirit we must forgive him, for he has certainly relieved us, by one smart shock, of protracted pain. He is gone, and may every blessing follow him.

Amen in tune.

"Ah!" I observed, "that is more in tune than the very discordant Gone! Gone! Gone! Gone! It was something like the *Amelia* talking in her native tongue to the *Cybele.*"

"It is a pity, the captain did not carry you off too, you plague, we should then have escaped the two miseries in parting at a much cheaper rate," said Ellen.

"Do you think so? Would you give up the next twenty-four hours?"

"No, I recant, for I mean to make you feel

all my vexation, that you may have cause to remember us.

"I have a dose for him, too," archly put in Charlotte.

"Am I to be left out," said mamma. "Upon my word, Horatio. it is very silly indeed, your coming home to tantalize us thus, and Captain Lofty says it must not happen again in his ship; you must now wait until you get your step, and that there are other boys who have relations."

"Yes mamma, that has oppressed my mind, but I knew that the captain would not allow me to have my own way. I consider myself here 'on duty.'"

"Under whose commands?" Ellen enquired.

"Nobody commands a naval officer on shore, madam; it is contrary to the royal regulations. Tyranny is, however, exercised even in this free country." Her very lips threatened me.

She reddened and said, "Well, sir, as you grow older, I find you become no longer the

play-thing, no longer the pet; take care of that golden chain, it is very tough, very ductile, but it might snap; no scolding can return it to its pristine condition. I devoutly hoped that it might become stronger and heavier as you advanced in experience, but I have strange fears of late."

Here was a damper! She was in earnest, downright earnest. Well, until we were alone, I determined to await the finale, for come it would, I clearly foresaw—so much for ill-timed jokes!—When men quit their ships, they should leave ship discussions behind them. One unfortunate word requires a volume of explanation; and if a naval superior be present, the chances are, you are set down, for your attempt at wit, as one of those despised animals, "a sea lawyer." Here, then, was another self-imposed lesson:—"Leave the ship matters until they are sought, never intrude them."

I have never mentioned Lord St. Vincent's maxims, because I was not quite sure they

were intended to be divulged; they were couched in abrupt, uncouth, and imperative language, but they were rough diamonds, and as I get them polished, they will leak out in some manner reflected in my mind; as in the present instance, I decline the entire credit. I have seen and felt the obvious meaning of "Never, sir, discuss naval matters before a woman, unless you wish to be taken for a fool or a coward." Rather strong, my lord, splinters will fly, and perhaps may do some good, if well comprehended. But coarseness is not inviting; the coward may fear the shot. On board the *Amelia*, when any lad talked big, Haskins would sigh heavily, and exclaim, "Oh, my big brother, I wish he were here."

Our evening was deliciously passed. However, I had to await my doom. The library of this beautifully adapted cottage had the bows, the gun-room, and the cabin. Ellen motioned towards the cabin—there, like a culprit—but who would not be such a culprit! I was very significantly commanded by an eye

I dared not disobey. The family, somehow or other, got into the bows, and there we were left to fight it out—*Charlotte*, the look-out frigate, kept 'a very bright eye' on us.

"Well, Horatio, come here—very near me—for we may never meet again!" This was a broadside I never contemplated. The cruel wretch waited to see the effect; and, as my topsail fell on the cap, every running rope unrove, and the carpenter was called to sound the well; for every man at the guns was paralyzed, and we had paid off so as to expose ourselves to a tremendous raking, second dose. She, instead of wearing and following up her advantage, quietly luffed up, and added—

"I mean, Horatio, that it has pleased God, thus far, to preserve you from mishap. But I have a strange presentiment that this cruize will be attended with more danger, and I should be sorry that you should leave me without knowing how, with much more than mother's love, I regard you—and I have a claim which neither you, nor your mother, nor any

other earthly being but the rector, can understand—I claim your respect.—I disdain any obedience or respect which does not flow from the inmost recesses of your heart—and those feelings must flow with purity—no exaction, no mistaken gratitude Away, I will have none of it! I have devoted my life to you, do not shorten it by becoming less the idol I have raised. Yes, you are at present formed from your cradle by me, and I am proud of my work. But, oh, God! punish not my sin—if it should be such in this world—if, in my motives, I have mistaken my duty."

She ceased; we both shed enough tears to satisfy ourselves that we were in earnest.

She resumed:—"And now, Horatio, let me pursue my injunctions or advice; but I feel very inadequate to do so now. However, let me only say, that your quick, generous replies, when they have no hidden sting, delight me; but the wit of pretty speeches, unmeaning nothings, or compliments—much as you may intend them to

be agreeable—simply hit my shield, and fall despised.

"That you love me as you should and tell me in private, will never offend me; but our feelings, my Horatio, are of too sacred a character—as you will have yet to learn—to render them the subject of ridicule to strangers, or others than ourselves; and the very peculiar position which I hold as regards your mother, renders it still more important, until you, upon opening the sealed packet, on attaining your majority, perceive that more than ordinary caution should be observed. She is already jealous, and feels naturally that there has been a want of confidence, on the part of your father, by entrusting me with your guardianship."

"Oh, Horatio! this is the distressing point! point! But will you believe *me*—will you trust me when I say that two or more short years will elucidate all? Then you will be able—having your eyes open—to act as a man, supported by a woman—by still your own Ellen.

"I would not breathe a vapour of blame on your mother—she is totally unconnected, as if you were not her child; and yet it is a melancholy truth that she was not a proper person to have any control over you. For that, and for other sufficiently good reasons, your future weal and woe were entrusted to me. And I have, as you almost know, given up woman's privilege to select her own happiness, and given my pledge to remain single—aye, for ever—until I see your happiness sealed or accomplished.

"I have now revealed more than I intended, I am satisfied that you comprehend me, and if you promise to treat me as your second mother, and cease compliments, which pain me, I shall be relieved from one great source of anxiety."

"Oh! indeed, my more than mother, I do."

And I was, again, a very infant!

My readers may have sometimes, during the perusal of my narrative have felt inclined to ask with respect to the relations between my mother and myself, "But where are the

mother's feelings?" True; but, she never knew she had a *son* till Ellen formed him. He was left to the nurse, to the stable, and to Ellen, on whose apparent *charity* the family existed, until I went to sea!

"Now, Horace, we are again in Divan. And as you are to be killed, it is incumbent that you make your will."

"My will?"

"Well, in equity, not law,—I am to be your executor should you die, and I must know your wishes. I will see them carried legally into effect on the twenty-first anniversary of your birth, for that extraordinary power is vested in me for your sister's benefit, as your mother, yesterday, had a very clear notion of, but I hold the powers. Now your sister has arrived at an age which renders decision important. Her happiness, even before your majority, is in my hands subject to your confirmation as regards any property which by law may fall in. It is, therefore, of importance that I should be *au courant* of your feelings in such a

matter. And if you suspect any little *tendre* which has escaped my close eye, I think you had better, openly and freely, discuss it with her, and let me know your final resolve."

She vacated her seat and called in Charlotte, who filled it, and smothered me with a sister's embrace.

"Well, Charlotte! Ellen wishes, in case of death or prolonged absence, to know my wishes respecting your welfare; and has hinted that you may have offers, or now, indeed, preferences to which my assent would be pleasant. Now, Miss Charlotte, open your heart and let me peep into it."

"No—no, not so fast, gently if you please, I am not to be taken by storm, Sir Horatio. Make your advances with more tact, or you will find that your sister has imbibed some of your ability for the art of defence."

"Oh! well, you will not surrender under the common summons? Not even under the despatches from Ellen?"

"No! I can wait if needs be; and the man

that cannot wait on trial is no mate for the sister of Horatio Howard."

"But suppose I never return. We have no time to lose!"

"Well, Horatio, what have you to ask?"

"Now that is like a sensible girl, and I will exact no promises. I wish to fire the first broadside. Were you or were you not mortally wounded by a certain random shot on a certain day at a certain cottage near Gosport?"

"That shot did strike; but more deponent cannot tell."

"Did you, or did you not, after that said action, and upon more mature consideration, hoist the white flag?"

"Possibly! there may be some truth in that; but I was giddy, did not know my power then, nor do I now,"—making an inclination of her stately head. "Nor do you expect me to reveal more?"

"Certainly not. Has *Plover* any charmed name for you?"

"None, but as my brother's friend is concerned."

"In short, has any shore-going fellow crossed you that you have taken a preference to?"

"None! and more, I am almost as much a savage as yourself. The man who wins this hand must, probably, be of your own cloth; a brother to you in essence, never to estrange us, and must be worthy by deeds, not words."

"Well, as my consent is implied, may I ask, in confidence—no spies near—If the original enemy got alongside and showed fight, is it likely the white flag would be again displayed?"

"Cannot say no. Should hesitate, examine his papers, refer the case to Commodore Ellen, and, if he passed muster, I might permit him to make his case known at head-quarters. But I would not commit myself—I should keep the flag of truce flying, unless Ellen produced powers."

"Exactly so. Oh, you cunning puss! Kiss your own brother."

We were then silent for a few minutes, but the young lady apparently preferred conversation; for, suddenly looking up, with a flush, she said—

"Take not all this for what would occur; for, to tell you the truth, if I knew that he or you had conversed on such a matter, I would not even see him."

"Indeed?"

"Come, no more bantering; I have told you all."

"Not all. Did you never hear from him?"

"Never! How could you imagine such nonsense?"

"Well, he never mentioned your name, and that was suspicious."

"However, I give my consent, if anything of the kind should happen, of which I have no idea; and now Ellen must rejoin."

"But, surely, *you* have some secret?"

"None. I never dream of marriage. My wife will tumble across my path some day, and I shall make some foolish marriage—

unless Ellen, indeed, is schooling one unknown to us all, to astonish me."

"What! and no secret for me, your beloved sister? I almost repent having revealed mine—if I was to have no return."

"Yours! Capital! You puss!"

"Brothers are wicked torments!"—and she flew off, exclaiming, "I trust to your honour, Horatio!"

Ellen now entered the room, saying, "Here has been a heavy action fought, If I mistake not."

"No," I replied—all has turned out as I expected. *I* shall have a *sealed packet* also, to be opened in case an enemy should appear, but I much fear that our ideas will not coincide."

"Now, Mister Wisdom, I think they *will*, but I will not listen to the secrets of birds but patiently await the issue of events. Your friend, if he be one, will not be warned off next time. Nor will the flag of truce fly in vain. I had my reasons.

"Well, we young ones, cannot compete with old birds. I must have my sealed packet also. Yes, I will write it to-night and seal it with that identical seal."

Thus ended that eventful evening; it had cleared up many doubts and put us all in the right road again. After a very affectionate good-night, Ellen and Charlotte remained to say a few words, and then Ellen embraced and kissed us both saying, "May God preserve you both to be useful members of society." I finished my sealed packet and also letters to Fanny, Dr. T., and the curate, and retired to my room, where Louisa awaited to see me housed and that I wanted nothing.

CHAPTER VI.

I WAS up and stirring, for I could not divest my mind of the misery brewing at Portsmouth—and yet as far as the simple trial itself was concerned, it created no more stir than many any others. It was confined chiefly to a few ships, and a few busy meddlers who had worked up the mischief to suit their own evil purposes.

The morning was cold and dreary, with occasional mist. I sauntered until I found the main road, leading over Portsdown Hill to London, and saw two persons, evidently military men, anxiously awaiting the arrival of the coach. When it came up, a man dis-

mounted, gave his place to the apparent superior on the box, and the companion got up behind. Both evaded my gaze; the servant or companion, I thought was known to me.

The man, having his instructions, remained. He seemed at a loss, and I inquired if I could assist him. He replied—

"Well, sir! I am to seek and render assistance to two officers, somewhere in this neighbourhood of the Havant Road, I understood, and return to Portsmouth with them."

A post-chaise now came towards us from the quarry, and I could perceive two naval officers within. The servant knew the parties, jumped up on the little seat before, and off they went, at a great rate, to Portsmouth. Presently, a young woman came from the same direction, and instantly addressed me—

"Oh, sir! they have been a fighting, sir, and the navy officer is badly hurt, sir. I am sure he will die, sir. They fired pistols, sir, and one ball cut my apron, look, sir! Oh, dear!—what shall I do?"

"Go home, my good girl—what can you do?—where do you live?"

"In that house, close by, sir."

"Then go home; you cannot now help it. You might, had you made a noise, have stopped it, and thus, perhaps, prevented further mischief."

She determined now to make up for it, and commenced screaming at such a rate, that the inhabitants of her domicile rushed out with pitchforks and other instruments, and I was not quite sure I should escape. But I stood coolly, and advised them to take her home, as she had been scared at a duel in the quarry.

"Oh, yes!" she bellowed out; "he did shoot him—I saw it all."

The parties, thereupon, seized me very unceremoniously, and my coolness surprising them, they inquired—

"*This man?*"

"No! not he; two sodger men, with blue silk braided coats."

Addressing me—"Hast seen 'em?"

"Yes! they have gone to London by the light coach. I saw two men answering their description get on the coach."

"And why didst thee make such a howling?"

"The gentleman said I ought."

"Yes! before you saw them fire."

"Oh! that is all!—hope no offence, sir?"

"None."

So I walked home. I thought I knew the countenances of both inside the post-chaise; one resembled one of the prisoners advisers, and, indeed, both did. Was this, then, another branch of misery? I much feared that it was. I almost fancied the wounded man resembled the prisoner himself, but his countenance was averted. A few hours would solve all.

I hurried home, put myself to rights, for the rough handling had discomposed me not a little, and reached the breakfast table. No questions were asked, that awaited a more convenient season. I was now old enough to judge of propriety. Ellen looking enquiringly,

I said, "I will tell you candidly, come to the other end of the room." When I glanced over the facts, she made no remark, we rejoined, and there it ended. We dined between the services, in order to allow of my getting to Portsmouth earlier. Ellen and Charlotte proposed to accompany me, but soon saw the inconvenience, and our leave-taking was perhaps, more solemn than before. At five I was on my journey.

I found Captain Lofty impatiently awaiting my arrival, and pacing his room in no pleasant mood. "All right, Howard, you are an excellent fellow."

He rang the bell, and when the servant entered, enquired, "Are my people here?"

"Yes, sir, all ready.

And in a very few moments we were at the King's Stairs, and off to Spithead, under canvass. As we neared, the ship made sail, and was just feeling her canvass as we got alongside. All the other ships followed us, and we passed through the Needles that night, and parted company.

I saw nothing more of the captain until the next morning, when, it being my morning watch, I was invited to breakfast alone. I clearly saw that he had something heavy on his mind. He sent the steward out, and then asked me distinctly and pointedly—

"Howard, had you anything to do with that duel?"

"No, sir."

"You were observed near the ground, and we were told, arrested as the principal."

"That is true, but strange; I will state the facts plainly."

He then breathed freely, and said—

"Of course you know the parties?"

"Indeed, sir, I do not; I thought once that the face of the wounded man was Saumarez."

"It was, he is dead. I, on the report, pledged my character, that if you were concerned I would delay, as my orders were optional. Your arrival put that, with the assertion of one of the seconds, 'that you only

saw the carriage in the road,' beyond further doubt, and I was anxious to prevent unnecessary delay, as I should have been compelled to sit on all the remaining courts-martial. Every officious officer was superseded yesterday, ten lieutenants, and two commanders will (quietly) ask 'to attend to their private affairs.' Every officer of the disaffected ship will be paid off, and a fresh company of marines be embarked; the serjeant and junior lieutenant have been sent here at my request, and such wide-spread misery never was before heard of. It is kept very quiet, and it is the wish of the Admiralty to smother it as much as possible; Spithead is, therefore, for the present, cleared; ships from the Downs have been ordered to assemble, to afford three captains, if necessary, to proceed further. As you value my wishes, do not let this be talked of below. Now we are off to Brest and Basque Roads, and then to cruize, but 'Mum.'"

I then rejoined the mess, where I soon learned that the court-martial affair was too

serious to be discussed. However, Haskins asked—

"Is that fellow dead?"

"'That fellow,' as you term him, I believe is."

"Oh, my good fellow, we know him better, and possibly later than you."

"Well, old fellow, I hope you have enjoyed yourself?"

"Very much," I replied. "But I hear that my absence has prevented others from seeing as much of the shore as I could have wished. But have you heard anything about the *Plover?*"

"No; but there are some letters for you; have you not yet received them? the clerk has them or your marine."

Just then the clerk entered with them, and said—

"That must be from Captain Noble; but the other is from some left-handed friend."

"Well," I said, "I know, before I open

them. This is from Post Captain Noble. This, First-Lieutenant Fitzjames;" and a cheer, which brought out Mr. Salmond's compliments, made the berth ring. Out sprang Haskins, and I heard him deliver himself to the effect—"Only the youngsters cheering Captain—(posted, sir)—Noble and his gallant first, Mr. Fitzjames, now his first-lieutenant." Another cheer, but the captain did not heed it; he had crossed the water, and guessed, this time, pretty considerably near the truth.—As I read my letters, I let out at times.—

"Taken a large corvette, big enough to hoist in *Plover*—Captain posted into her—Fitzjames wounded slightly in right arm, and some good men gone. First-lieutenant, at present in command of *Plover*, will probably be confirmed — admiral will not interfere with vacancy he holds — Captain Noble's acting order—gone to Halifax to be nursed, and get men. Wanted *Amelia* then to take the frigate, which ran; perhaps, she may find her yet—

believe her name to be 'Catch me if you can' —supposed to be sneaking home, laden with plunder—will fight hard, probably; therefore, treat her like a practised enemy—no raw, sea-sick hands; she has a picked crew; I cannot just now recollect her name. Our old Noble did his work in his own rich style—quite a boy still."

"There, my lads, you have Fitzjames's yarn. What the noble captain can have to say to me, I know not. I must read and digest his letter, before I let out any of his secrets. Oho! he wants a second, and thinks I may have served my time, and can manage to join him. But he is mistaken; this new order about not passing until one is nineteen has dished me for the present; and here I must serve my time out. Nothing like one long good certificate, under a captain with a name. One never goes ship-hunting after that label is signed."

"Right, young fellow; that lost me my commission three years ago. My godfathers

were all men of straw, and Lord Cochrane said he would have none of that school in his ship. If I had had then only one line from our present chief, I should have been snapped at. But, I suppose, my young hero—for I see that you will not long wait for your rank, independent of any interest—might I venture to ask, if I should obtain my commission, would you patronise such an old dry stick as your humble servant?"

"Not, Haskins, if you are to be my humble servant. But it will always gratify me to think that it may be our lot to serve together; and if you should be so unfortunate as to be behind me in the race, if my coat-tails will help you, hold on, my good fellow, and I will try to pull you up to the top step of the ladder."

"Howard, you are a good soul!—indeed, too good for a midshipman's berth, I was about to say. But I take no unfair advantage of any man. If I should be fortunate enough to find you with a vacancy, I will not

claim your promise; but I may intimate that, if it is not inconvenient, I may wish to serve under you. I will hear of no rash vows—I may change. You know nothing now of my previous character, and before I intruded myself, you may be assured, I should court such an investigation as it would be your duty to make, before I would consent to join any officer. I am not sure of remaining here; it is even probable that I may be removed into the Basque-Road squadron."

Everyone protested. He said it would grieve him very much, but he feared his old captain would claim him, and there in a line-of-battle-ship he would be buried, perhaps—never get his head above the lower deck.

We had now rounded Ushant, hauled in for the Black Rocks, and found the *Briton* looking out; we closed when she signalled "Admiral Douarnenay Bay." There we soon sighted the flag and saluted; exchanged despatches, and moved on for Basque Roads. Here the squadron was so close in, that the enemy tried

a shell at us—as we had, during the captain's absence, drifted too far in. It did not fall far short; we filled, and as we passed under the stern of the *Admiral* I think, were hailed, 'Discharge Mr. Haskins into the *Conquestador*.' Poor Haskins, this was not his ship, but he felt that all hopes for his advancement were baffled; he foretold his fate but too truly; and we lost an invaluable officer miserably sacrificed. I learned, that captain tried very hard to retain him, but the order was imperative, and captains of frigates just then had no favour in the eyes of the great men. We sailed that evening. We obtained two youngsters, smart lads of sixteen, but they had yet to learn manners, and as I was now senior master's mate, indeed, the only one, I had no very pleasant job. This injudicious step, as will be seen hereafter, was highly injurious to the welfare of the service.

We ran down the Bay, along the coast of Portugal, and reached Teneriffe, without sighting even a cruiser; there we touched;

obtained wine, bullocks, fruit, and vegetables; enjoyed ourselves at a tertulio, given by the governor, learned a few Spanish words from very pretty lips, and off again for the Cape de Verds, which we searched closely for any lurking privateers, and then struck for the track of homeward-bound Indiamen, so as to apprize them of the present disposition of our fleet, and also of that of the enemy, which was for the present blockaded in Brest and Basque Roads. We soon met one of the tail of the convoy, and ascertained that the rest had passed on, but we might fall in with three French frigates working up, as they imagined, the African coast. We stood in for Sierra Leone, and there we lay, as we thought, to die like sheep. But, fortunately, intelligence reached of three French frigates being at the Isles De Los. Three or thirty seemed all the same; we were soon at sea, and having shipped the crew of a brig captured, but sent in a cartel to Sierra Leone, we started in pursuit. For obvious reasons I shall be silent. It is

not my intention to fight that action as it was fought, and most gallantly—or fight it better than it was fought—but somehow or other I could tell the tale much better than it has been narrated, and deeds of valour were done there which would have graced history better than the puny affair we find recorded. The *Amelia*, unfortunately, had more than her complement, and the unfortunate main top-sail braces (I believe should read main-top bowline), let go by some lubber, after the braces were shot away—caused great mischief.

The other unfortunate events were the loss of the proper commanding officers—the assumption of command by those who did not belong to her—and of no one adequately carrying out the captain's orders—no Noble fighting—all helter-skelter noise.

The fighting was desperate, and truly, as narrated, did the antagonists fight with sponges. But had the vessel not fallen foul, ten to one would have fallen, by the cool, deliberate aim of the marines, at the French

serving the rammers. They fell, and took with them the sponges in repeated instances; and distance alone was required to have almost reduced the matter, on the opponent's side, to musketry—for the guns of the *Amelia* were well served, and the masts of the *Arethusa* would soon have been by the board, and all her sharpshooters, from aloft, sent to their reckoning, had the vessels not been fouled. So I perceive my notes run, and query,—Why were the top-gallant sails taken in?

Possibly, by the captain's order I may be told. There are reasons why I should not discuss more. I should like a reply, to get at the truth if I could; but who lives to contest it?—and it only remains to ask, where are the captain's letters on this subject? He would never communicate these for publication. But several I could name, and alive, well know his feelings relative to that action, and how bitterly he felt the neglect of such services as he had rendered.

But the historian forgets to tell that when

the *Amelia* next day mustered, ready to renew action, if compelled, it was still under the impression that the consort would get off, and he should then be able to cope with *two*. Reverse the case,—would the *Amelia*, remanned as the *Arethusa* was, have avoided tion?—would she have allowed an enemy so desperately cut up to escape? Never!

CHAPTER VII.

Not long after the above action was fought, I reached England again; and, having nearly served my time, and got my certificate, I remained on shore until I was nearly nineteen years of age. About this time I took a new name, but I will still maintain my *nom de guerre*, and write under Horatio Howard.

I reached home in March, when I found them all safe at the rectory; and, owing to the kindness of my captain, I reached it before they could hear anything of the action. I had, therefore, all the story to myself. But all they cared about was my precious self; and

fighting was not to be alluded to at Ashdown Vale. Home affairs had remained in pretty much the same state during my absence. The school was now flourishing; also the master's family increased by two, and the matron looking still more like one of her pupils than a mistress; nevertheless, Mr. Fitzjames gave her a very high character. The curate's bachelor's den was also erected about a quarter of a mile off, at the extremity of the church field, and just peeped between two crossing clumps of thick underwood.

I thought that he and Fanny might do worse than come to an understanding; but she was too high-spirited—had become a very high-minded, but determined ally of the champion, and looked up to some hero yet to be ushered on the stage. Take care, Fanny! I thought; this waiting for something better is slippery work; and the better man, when he finds out that he has 'the weather guage,' sometimes bears down, and commits sad havoc with foolish hearts—yes! sometimes, as I

know, breaks them! But that was her business. Doubtless, she had the best advice.

As my name was now replaced on the books of the guard-ship, to await the eventful passing day, the whole family removed to Portsmouth soon after my arrival; and we were once more assembled—a truly happy family—at our Hampshire home.

We had not long been settled, before I received a commission to search out Lofty and Noble, and persuade them to accompany me home.

Delighted with my mission, off I started, and caught both captains just as they were quitting the admiral's office. They requested me to accompany them to the dockyard, as they could not reply until they returned to the admiral. I asked permission to join them there, as I wished to find Dr. Howard.

"Very good. You will find us at the commissioner's office, or not far from it."

I found the doctor, and had no trouble in persuading him to bring down Fitzjames, and

arrange with the captains, so that the same carriage would bring them all home at night, for I knew they must return.

The dockyard matters over, we returned to Portsmouth, and by permission of the admiral, who wished to detain them, we moved off early to "Champion Villa."

We arrived about three o'clock, much to the surprise of all, and I informed Ellen that two more might be expected. "Excellent," she said, "for I have, this instant, persuaded two dear friends of mine, with their mother, to come, and we, ladies, would have been too much for you. Let me see—seven men and seven ladies—why, you are quite a general."

The captains and myself passed part of the interval before dinner in an animated conversation on various matters connected with the service, and although much of what was said would be scarcely interesting or even intelligible to the general reader, I cannot omit the following observations.

* * * *

"You soar too high," exclaimed Captain Noble. "You had better be made a peer, become first lord of the Admiralty, and then I will support you."

"Nevertheless," said Captain Noble, "if it effected much good, I doubt the amount, as weighed against the evil. These educated men, as they fancy themselves, would be a pest in every ship where they were embarked. No! no! any education of that nature should be general. I would have sergeants of artillery as the principal instructors—men who have been accustomed to drill officers, as well as men; and captains, as well as officers, should be present on all these occasions. These sergeants should receive extra pay for this duty. All my officers and men have, in this manner, by my private arrangement, been so drilled; they are good soldiers, and the men enter into the spirit of riddling a cask, laid out as a mark, and allowed to float down with the wind or tide. Again: in the practice of storming, they are landed at some

beach affording cover, along which they steal in sharpshooter style, and, at the pre-concerted signal, rush on to their object. But we have none of your ramrod broth—no 'playing soldiers,' that would cause a mutiny. They are taught to march well, and it has been explained to them, in boarding how much stronger they become by discipline. And if landed for service, I have the commander of the troops' word that they eclipsed the famed militia of Halifax—and you know they are not to be despised, Captain Lofty."

"I like your notions, Noble, you must fight a good action. It does not require an artilleryman to point a gun, that is, in my opinion, one of the tricks of the service. You know that, Noble. I can read your educated man—and you can recollect the ridiculous figure a certain artilleryman cut, when he thought himself the only man who could point a gun—when every shot, *his excepted*, both at long and short range, struck the cask. He invariably

failed. That is not the only evil—want of nerve in the aim, impetuosity, or over-zeal, as you term it—missing a frigate when the *eye* of a loader was to be aimed at; all these absurd mistakes, your self-constituted heroes commit—forgetting discipline and endeavouring to command independently, they neutralise every gun at their quarters. These are the *pests* of our profession! Look at the artillery! Does not your heart beat when you see each man firm at his station, no hurry, no loss of command—"down—" every man flat, —"up, ready, fire—" and certain destruction is hurled in the teeth of the enemy—then, as cool cucumbers, they load and await the order."

"But, my good fellow, turn your attention to our ships. I will not expose them. But, granted your men are all perfect, even if they could pass each shot into the spot they intended, are you quite sure that it is judicious? Would not a fair marksman, hitting three feet on either side—taking the broadside view of the question—do, perhaps, even more execution?

It is this new-fangled notion of independent firing—of throwing overboard all *concentration of command*, and making the utmost confusion, without permitting the smoke even to clear, that an aim may be taken—which prevents any good action from being fought.

"Now, hear a curious proposition, Noble. If I have another action to fight, I will guard the magazines. The enemy, if he be brought within musketry, shall have his share of killed by that arm. He shall not load with impunity, and as his gun is running out, my alternate gun shall fire. Two rounds from his guns for one from mine, I can afford, if I have but decent marksmen. Turn this in your mind, and, before you open fire, instruct your officers fully of your intended modes of attack. Above all, hesitate to fire *one* raking shot without *one* determined *spot*—let that be the neck of the rudder, if astern: the bowsprit and jib-geer, foreward. In either case, you may select your next point of attack, if you have not thrown away shot.

"Calculate the level of your midship gun, and the level of the enemy's bow, with all the dead wood, and men lying down to avoid the bow-rake; and tell me, even if the enemy had means of defence, and you were trying the experiment, how many men you might wound, and on which side of the deck are they? Grape canister, every missile that you launched at the bowsprit, by the maindeck, and at the jib-boom by the quarter-deck guns, may save you much trouble and loss of life on both sides.

"But no man can fight without officers—who are not to fight for *themselves*, or for their humours, but for their country and their leader.

"Upon my word, we have forgotten where we are. This summer-house of peace has made us all very pugnacious. But I hope Howard will turn all this over in his mind, and think of such confusion, rope of sand, or of too many cooks.

"And, now, let us rejoin the ladies, for we have little time for a walk before dinner."

On entering the house, we found all the

ladies bonneted and awaiting our return. But before proceeding, there was one very necessary point to be understood: where are we all bound? and should we part company? where is the rendezvous? "Well, I think," said Ellen, "that we are all inclined to mount nearer to the clouds. The obelisk above us none can miss, all lost sheep must repair there. The dinner, for sundry reasons, has been fixed at six to-day, therefore we have plenty of time."

So we ascended the hill, and ranged over those heights so well known, from Spithead, not at all pleasant to the feet, being just at this season, somewhat slippery.

It was a fine April evening, the spring was rather advanced, and vegetation generally, scant as it is here, afforded the hope of a warm summer. It was one of the brightest of the season, and no rain in quantity had fallen for some time; therefore, it was probable that the summit would afford firmer and drier footing. But bare and bleak as these hills are, the eye can only seek for refreshment from the lower

artificial ground about. Fareham and Spithead on the right, extending in the direction of Southampton, and the brow descending towards Chichester, on the left; the Isle of Wight in the distant foreground; but the shipping forest was rather bare at that date.

To separate and find lonely walks, would have puzzled a landsman; and here, on this sea of chalk, I must say that the simplest plan was to follow your leaders, keeping within signal distance.

Of the other pairs I took little notice, Fanny and myself were mated *pro tem.* and we had many little secrets to talk about, which it is not my intention to divulge. However, talk not of the curiosity of the softer sex, we have it quite as strongly implanted in us, but we are more cautious, and less dependent on that peculiar courtesy, by which a pair of piercing dark, or even blue eyes, laughs at all conventional forms, and demands in plain terms, the secret you might determine to conceal. We are compelled to move by a more circuitous

road, and get at the citadel by stratagem. Such was now my determination. I had that peculiar power of seeing ahead, and I could not understand the coolness of Fanny to her reverend admirer, unless she had some one else in her eye. Now I had my suspicions, and as we had through life been play-mates, more affectionately connected than the generality of brothers and sisters are, and our little "hopes and fears were to each other known," I thought I might venture to sound her disposition. Well, the old story—courage—but here my object was likely to be misinterpreted and dangerous—not at all—I had cleared for action, and was fully prepared to meet boarders. So putting a very brave face on the matter, I observed—

"Fanny, you have now grown into such a woman, that I am afraid to talk to you as I was accustomed."

"Yes, Horatio, I feel it too—you ever had my confidence, and I assure you that our brotherly and sisterly love never will be severed by me."

"Well, that is just what is correct, for it is now time to put an end to any little fun we may have enjoyed as children. Ellen has, doubtless, informed you of her thoughts?"

"Yes, Horatio; but —— but what is your opinion?"

"My opinion is simply this:—First, it is possible I may never find any one to suit my temper; next, that our relationship is too close to allow of our forming a still nearer one; and, finally, that it is clear, that I shall be disinherited, if I act contrary to the will of my father or Ellen. She has spoken out unmistakeably. Now, the next thing which now interests me, and ever will, is your future welfare. I am informed—true, only by surmise—that advances have been made by the curate, and if you should accede to them, all I can promise is, that if the presentation of your father's living falls into my hands, under such relationship only would I select him as the successor. But I have no feeling in the matter. You must make your

own election. As a brother, and as one who can see defects, when you might be blinded by affection, and looking to our future friendship in this world—I must say that I shall take no common interest in watching who this enviable man may be."

"Oh! Horatio, I do promise this—I will confide to you as a brother all I feel. I will never marry without consulting you, and my husband must consent to be as a brother to you. I do not like the position as the wife of a curate, nor do I believe his attention to extend beyond the interest which you have so plainly and so very generously propounded in the succession to my father's position. No! you know him not; there is a *very cold heart* under that white surplice! and I look for one warm and as energetic as my own, without guile or duplicity."

"But, Fanny, you are ahead of your reckoning. First, you must change clothes with me before you go in search of the *beau ideal* of your fancy. Or what traps, what incantations

have you prepared to attract him here? As for the curate, judging from his brother, I should think he must have a warm heart."

"Oh, no! Horatio; he told us very plainly one evening, he lost his at the university; and I never will have a second-hand one. This brother you allude to is a very different character, beloved by every one. He dines here to day."

"Indeed! and why keep it so profound a secret?"

"Well, I shall have an opportunity, then, of scanning your hero!"

"And will honestly give your opinion?"

"Certainly! why should you doubt it. He is safe engaged, and will not be so sly as men who have hearts to lose generally are."

"Do not trust implicitly to that."

"And now, was it not somewhere here you fought the duel?"

"Me!—I fight a duel? I must quarrel first."

"And then you would fight, would you?" holding up her finger.

"That is a question I decline answering. Some men cannot command themselves, or are commanded by others; I belong to a profession, and the enemy I must meet, if he be truly one. But this is no discussion for ladies. I have never asked myself such a question. But whence your question?"

"Oh! it was a current rumour, that you were in the presence of all parties, took no steps to arrest them, and were yourself arrested."

"Very true, but I am not a constable, I cannot arrest on suspicion, nor could I interfere with my superiors."

"Well, all that was satisfactorily explained. Ellen knew all about it, and it was fully accounted for by the doctor, who has a long story to tell you when you are alone."

"And now as I have given you some startling news, pray try a similar effect on my nerves by informing me who these two pretty girls are who are coming to dinner."

"Did not Ellen inform you?"

"No."

"Then do you, Mr. Diplomatist, expect me, the champion's private secretary, to divulge her secrets? No, I shall watch your nerves most narrowly. Charlotte will observe from behind them. Ellen will be on your left wing, as you would say, a little before your beam, and if you do not blush I shall ask mamma to stick a pin into you. Won't we torment you, my hero. But here we are all alone! None of the party in sight! Where are we? How ridiculous, Horatio, we shall appear! and such looks from all the party!"

"I am so glad! I shall enjoy your blushes first, and I shall ask Charlotte, the doctor, Fitzjames, and both captains to ask me every five minutes where I could have strayed, and what your bonnet was off for."

"It never was off, you plague."

"Yes! but you will have to explain and blush before these pretty girls. Now who has the best of the game?"

"Horatio, you always *did* teaze all my life."

"Yes, only to make you remember me."

"Well, I will not be so foolish again as to walk out alone with you. Come along; it must be late, and we are far behind; I think I hear the dinner bell."

We soon regained the house after sundry slips, found we had plenty of time, and passed off to our rooms unnoticed, the others, probably, not being aware of our absence.

CHAPTER VIII.

We dropped in by ones and twos into the long drawing-room, and were soon busily inquiring how we could have separated. Charlotte was more than usually anxious to know where I went; but I would not satisfy her at all, unless she first confessed her sins. Before we had proceeded further, Dr. Howard and Mr. Fitzjames were ushered in. I looked round for Fanny, but she was not present. I ran forward to receive Fitzjames, but he warded off the right arm, which evidently was not yet perfect; and, putting his left arm round my waist, said—

"Howard, I am so happy to see you. Pray introduce me to your mother and the other ladies."

He was well received, but most graciously by Ellen and Charlotte; but he started at finding Captain Lofty at home here, and was "delighted to renew the acquaintance."

"Not more than I am, Mr. Fitzjames," observed our captain, bowing.

And now Fanny entered.

"But here is another wild girl, Miss Fanny Howard; I am sure she will welcome any friend of mine." (She looked imploringly).

"Indeed, I will, Horatio, for your sake!" —and a beautiful expression shot across her countenance, with a most wickedly revengeful look towards me.

He returned to Captain Lofty, and said—

"Why, this, sir, is quite a surprise; I was informed that you dined with the admiral—our boat carried the invitation."

"Indeed," he replied, thoughtfully; "he never mentioned any formal invitation to me,

he asked me verbally, and I was most kindly excused. I shall have toexplain this. An invitation, under these circumstances, is a command."

Captain Noble asked if any came for him.

"Oh, yes; it is on your table at the 'George.'

"We shall be forgiven, doubtless," added Captain Lofty.

Charlotte put her inquisitive head forward, and asked—"And are you, indeed, bound to refuse ladies to dine with the admiral?"

"Oh, yes; etiquette demands it," replied Captain Lofty; "such invitations frequently are councils of war. It is implied that as it is necessary to see you, instead of keeping several officers away from their dinner, that the same object may be attained by social intercourse. If unimportant, you are easily excused, of which the secretary generally will inform you."

"And do you exact the same on board your ships?"

"Yes! In some cases necessity requires

even the exertion of actual compulsion. But unless an officer has a cause on which he is prepared to prefer charges against his captain or admiral, he is a most egregious fool for declining. But I see Ellen properly forbids ship affairs here."

The door now opened, "Lady and the Misses Power" were announced. Ellen did the honours, and Lady Power having received me most kindly, I fell instantly into conversation with the certainly very pretty daughters, and congratulated myself on Ellen's having discovered them.

Of course one of these pretty ones fell to my lot, it was the youngest, rather timid, and as far as my slight acquaintance helped me to discover, had lived very retired. If it was expected that I should pay great attention, I fear that I was very remiss. I was quite fatigued in extorting yes and no, and waited for more acquaintance until I knew whether I liked them.

In the presence of such powerful lights as Charlotte and Fanny, they shone faintly.

Charlotte was on the left of Captain Noble, next to Captain Lofty; Fanny was opposite me, and below Fitzjames, and all seemed to be fully engaged with their own partners, except Miss Power, who should have been on my right, as she was evidently deserted by Captain Noble, who, recollecting himself occasionally, turned round to pay some little attention. I tried to fire across the table, and get her into conversation, and succeeded at length in getting Fitzjames and Noble to remember she belonged to one of them. Mrs. Howard was on my right, and the rector at the foot of the table.

Before dinner was over, by great exertion I got my neighbour into conversation, and effected a cross-fire, maintained by Fanny and myself, and the (allied Powers,) which I pushed probably further than I otherwise would, simply to excite Fanny to make up for what I felt was almost want of civility. I was not sorry when the ladies retired, for I was becoming unhappy, and rather tired with my unsuccessful ex-

ertions, as I thought, if pity be akin to love, I am afraid that mine must have been very distantly related.

The tea was, by general consent, soon announced, and we rejoined the ladies. The conversation did flow a little more freely; but as I considered that I had sufficiently sacrificed myself to civility at dinner time, and as Charlotte, Fanny, Noble, and Fitzjames seemed to be fully occupied with each other, so I took to my old captain and Ellen, and was permitted to share in their conversation. The captain inquired—

"Horatio, when will you be ready to pass?"

"The first week in May, I think."

"Why, surely you know?" Ellen said.

"No he does not; and that is a subject on which I wish your advice."

Some sudden thought appeared now to strike Ellen, and she fell into a reverie, which lasted during several minutes. Her companions were far too polite to interrupt her,

and quietly awaited her leisure. At length, she said—

"Now, Captain Lofty, this young man has not, I believe, any legal title to the name of Brenton; and yet it would not be safe to risk his legal claims by any change, before they are tried and he attains his majority. He is simply, in the baptismal register, called Horatio Howard."

"The only reply I can make is, that his surname never is given in the register excepting as—the son of—so and so, which is not evidence, inasmuch as the clergyman cannot vouch for the truth. It is evidence of age only that he requires to pass with. As to his name in the books of the navy, let him retain all his names for the present. I will arrange that, or the doctor can if I am absent. Before he receives his commission, whenever that fortunate day may arrive, I would advise his sending a notice, to say that it is his intention when the law permits to be called simply by the name which belongs to the property which

may fall to him. But I have a strong reason at present, that he should retain the name of Brenton, as Lord St. Vincent is very tenacious, and might withdraw his interest, which I have reason to know he is now exerting for the grandfather's sake. But will you, Horatio, be prepared with your logs, papers, certificates, time, &c., on the 1st of May?"

"I shall be perfectly prepared when I receive my baptismal register, which, I believe, Ellen holds."

She bowed assent.

"Then, when Miss Percy informs me of the date, I will get the admiral to grant a passing day; and no one can work you up better than my friend Noble. During the time he is in harbour, I am sure he will be delighted; I almost fancy he would like to pass again, I never saw such a mad boy, just look at him.

"And now, I think, there is an ominous calm in the conversation. It is slack water, and I think we must trip."

There was a general move.

"Well, my boy," said Noble, as he was leaving, "you recollect that you have not yet returned my call; I shall expect you."

"Oh! yes, I will with you, sir, too soon, perhaps, to-morrow."

"All right—God bless you!" and with other kind adieux, after shipping the '*allied powers*' off, we were left alone.

It was a calm—dead calm—no more chirping, and each seemed too glad to steal off to bed.

Breakfast on the following morning was rather a silent meal, each individual's mind somewhat resembling the mother Cary's chicken or gull, pruning its feathers on a glassy sea, with a little swell after a gale, and being in that state of change from exuberant spirits to more solemn reflection, when one inquires—"What have I been saying?"

Shortly after breakfast, the Rector and I set off for the town, where we had, each of us, a good deal of business to transact. As soon as I had found my two friends, the captains,

I discovered that they were in some degree of excitement in consequence of information they had received, respecting their future movements. And to come to the pith at once, Captain Noble was to be removed with his ship's company into a frigate, and Captain Lofty into a ship of the line, as he had passed his ten years. This he would consent to, but I saw clearly that it did not suit his wishes, and he at once said to Captain Noble—

"Look out for my men. I have no objection to your picking, I think the service demands it, and we must manage it between us. I see little chance of any more line-of-battle ship actions, any men will do their duty there."

And so they left me to concert with the admiral before any official orders reached him.

In the course of the morning, Captain Noble and I took the gig at 'The Point,' and went to examine a pretty English-built frigate. Captain Noble did not seem to admire her, at first; but, as he went round the battery, and

measured the height of the deck, examined the training of the fore and after guns, and the spring of the decks, and as his keen eye glanced—standing at the main hatchway—alternately fore and aft, I saw that he was better satisfied. He asked the gunner if she sailed, and was informed that, "she did, when they caught her trim and gave her the dimity; but she was a wayward minx in the hands of many.

"Pray, sir, do you know her trim?"

"I do, sir; but what can a poor gunner say when there's so many more that like to have their say! I know when to hold my tongue, sir."

"Indeed!—I suppose, until you are desired to clear the magazine?"

"Why, then, sir, you knows we command below; and all above us must believe we do our duty."

"And, sir, if that secret happens to be stowed in your magazine, I suppose it comes up, if ordered?"

"Certainly, sir; that I was well schooled in by one Captain Lofty, when he was a lieutenant."

"Well, sir, I am to command this ship, and I shall retain you. I was once the first-lieutenant of that said Captain Lofty; and you will call upon him immediately at the 'George' —say by my order."

"Oh! by Captain Noble's order. Ay, ay, sir."

"Well, and what kind of man is the carpenter?" continued Noble.

"Sir! a man fit for anything—as much a seaman as a carpenter—would get the ship on to those dockyard walls, if you only gave the order."

"Well, quick! both your names?"

"Mine, sir, is Briggs; carpenter's, sir, is Williams."

So Noble noted them down, and we then went to the dockyard, where we met the commissioner, who said—

"Why, Noble, they tell me you are to have

the *Diana;* she is ordered to be ready by the 10th May. Sharp work, that!"

"Well, commissioner, all we can say is—if the dockyard are ready, I shall be only forty-eight hours after you turn her out."

"Well! my good fellow, you will dine with us on the 10th of May, if ready for sea? And bring an officer with you—two, if it suits you!"

"I shall accept, sir, and bring one or two, according to circumstances. It is possible this may be No. 2, sir. Allow me to introduce to you Mr. Horatio Howard."

"I shall be most happy to become acquainted with any follower of Captain Noble."

"No, sir, I was only one of his nurses. He belongs to Captain Lofty."

"Well, I must be silent. But, young fellow, you are very fortunate! Few lads in the navy can name such friends."

As we parted, the commissioner said—"We see very little of you Noble. It is not our fault."—He bowed, and promised to behave better, now he was to be in harbour.

"And now, young fellow, I am your passing captain for the day, be good enough to mast that ship in the basin. Lots of spars there."

"Well, that was done."

"Very good—but the mast is bad, we must cut down another from the wood here. Do you know how to select one?"

"No, sir."

"Well, that I could better explain to you on the spot—I will write it out for you; but, remember, investigate all such matters; one well-timed reply—the result of thought beyond the routine—stamps character. I have seen five or six trees felled—none good, and the seventh split by injudicious felling. This I will explain very shortly. One heavy blow would cause you to fall with a general concussion to your frame; a blow on some less dangerous part would enable you to stagger, and eventually fall exhausted, using your limbs.

"Now trees, having this same condition, never commence your cut on the open or

exposed side. The lee, or southerly, is often more porous, and offers less resistance. Calculate, if you can, that in its fall, it will be impeded by other adjacent, smaller trees —when you have passed its centre, you will hear it crack—make your carpenter cut always oblique, downwards. The tree inclines towards the side-cut—at every cut see, that when it breaks, it does not form a lever on the under side, by rough cuts unfinished, or or it will split up—and be cautious after it falls—perhaps, to sixty degrees—that your off-cuts do not produce splinters. Some men, indeed, think it preferable to girdle first.

"Well, sir, between this and the 5th of May, you will see the rigging of the *Diana*, and I shall be glad to instruct you, as our old boatswain will join, and the wound of Mr. Fitzjames will require that I shall assist him in my own peculiar modes of rig. And now let us visit the rigging-house. There, I expect, we shall find some of our rigging in pro-

gress—stretching the hawsers, perhaps. All this will be new to you, and will guide you in setting up rigging. There is an elastic force, beyond which it is unsafe to stretch hemp. It does not complain; but mast and rigging go together from its being over-stretched. You shall see this proved.

After some conversation, we found the rigging in hand was for the *Diana.*

"Well, I would wish my men and officers to be present. Can you take anything else for a few days?—I am Captain Noble."

"Oh, yes, sir! but we were told you were hard pushed."

"Not quite to a day," he observed.

"Now have you any broken rope?—I mean that which has been broken by the proof."

"Oh, yes, sir!—here is a piece."

He unlaid a strand, and we then could trace extensive internal ruptures of the fibres.

"Now make a bowline knot or any hitch with that rope, and apply the weights. It will yield at some hundreds less."

The master-rigger thought not, but tried. First with eight hundred weight.

It went like a carrot.

"Now try it again, merely at its end."

It bore the proof—straight.

"Well," sir, said the master-rigger, "you are right, sir, but I cannot see why."

"Simply, my good sir, because you put it to a greater strain than it is ever intended safely to bear."

Under such instruction I was prepared for passing.

As we walked towards Portsmouth, Fitzjames, looking almost wild, met us, and exclaimed—

"Oh, sir! I am afraid we are to be turned adrift, and you are to have some frigate up the harbour!"

"True, my dear sir; but we are to be consolidated. Pick that *Amelia* of all the old *Cleopatras!* Our crew, and officers; and *Diana* will shed her pale light to show us where to find amusement!"

"Well, sir, if you are satisfied; but we were all so snug, and she sails so well! more credit to take a frigate in her, sir."

"Perhaps so; but stir your stumps, or we may lose some of the *Cleopatra's*. Find Captain Lofty, and take his orders."

"Aye, aye, sir;" and he vanished, giving me a look, as much as to say—Duty calls.

We found Captain Lofty at the 'George,' very low spirited. A second dispatch, by express, reached the admiral, and the morrow would change many who little expected to be disturbed. He would have the *Northumberland*, which had a fine ship's company, and he was permitted only a boat's crew from the *Amelia*. Her crew was to complete the *Diana*.

He had the admiral's order to discharge into the *Diana* the men named in the enclosed list, which he was to fill up. This he gave to Captain Noble, and Noble, transferring it to Fitzjames, Captain Lofty said—"I will insert the boat's crew," placed the steward, cook, and coxswain, and returned the paper.

All this must be tame to my readers; but to the 'old war dogs' it will bring back many a brotherly feeling, now for ever extinct, as the type of what then was termed "the true-hearted sailor," that term which set the hearts of as many true-hearted maids glowing with an enthusiasm which possibly has produced the "new school." The talent may be improved, but the generous spirit which made Christians, I may say, of our noble profession, is extinct.

We reached home, and there, indeed, found rest. It was late, and our customary happy evening passed, not, however, without incident; nature, indeed, seemed to keep my intellect moving. A very ominous pile of letters lay upon the table.

CHAPTER XI.

When the other members of the household had retired to rest, Ellen, my mother, the rector, and myself, sat in council in the library. Ellen being the most masculine where energy was required, opened the business. My mother was peculiarly depressed.

"Here is a threatening letter, calling upon Mrs. Howard Brenton to assert the rights of her son, and that speedily, or all his claims will be swept away, and his mother left in penury.

"Then she is incited to look narrowly into, and question the right of one, calling herself

Emily Percy, as to her management of the estates, and to make her appear in court, and declare her true name, establish her rights, and show by what authority she exercises them.

"Finally, if this is not done before the third day of May, 1815, that ruin will visit the whole family."

Ellen folded her arms, threw herself back on the sofa, and was silent, deep in thought; but her eye was like that of the basilisk, and now we had a sudden metamorphosis. The quiet, retiring rector was transformed into the animated, spirited, even youthful advocate; his eye became unnaturally bright.

"Still living!" he exclaimed. "Would not the wrong inflicted on the father, the fatherless and widow, satisfy his dastardly, cringing, murderous disposition. Did he think to elude our vigilance? Did he imagine this shallow trick would breed that dissension here, which might indirectly favour his evasion of the laws of his country at a future day?"

He dropped into his chair, quite overcome

by his feelings—relapsed into the rector. My mother had fainted, and was carried to the sofa at the further end of the room. When Ellen returned, she explained that she was present when the letters arrived, and my mother, deeming the first "a business letter," had thrown it to Ellen. Her quick sight detected at once whom it was from, and she retained the packet in her right, as one of my guardians.

Ellen now commenced :—

"I did not on my own bare judgment choose to act ; but, the rector being now associated, we have full powers.

"It is my painful province to inform you, Horatio, of sufficient to put you on your guard, to prevent the completion of the design upon what may become your inheritance—and, if not yours, *mine !* You, therefore, will understand how great my anxiety is to prevent any human being possessing such a malicious fever as to cause it to appear that I could by any means profit by your failure in heritage. In order that no such control or accident

should occur, I have remained free from the control of a husband.

"Now, it painfully occurs to me that, during the next two years, you will be terribly beset — your temper severely tried, and every effort made to provoke you to commit some breach of those conditions, by strict compliance with which alone you can gain your inheritance. Remember, that a duel would, in my conscience, bar your claim! I would refuse my signature. I have already told you more than the law authorizes, unless threatened; and be prepared to hear the worst, and may God sustain your courage and resolution. Your enemy is your mother's brother! He ruined your father! He controls — not by affection, but by the most dreadful tyranny — your mother! He was supposed to be dead, but that writing, all this machinery"—pointing to the papers—"is his! You must contrive to remain out of England until you are of age, then I can safely sign, and you must prosecute this monster—this

would be assassin of your mother, sister, yourself—and, perhaps, me!"

She seemed, overcome, and remained for some time alarmingly quiet; but as I chafed her hands, and kissed her cheek, she seemed to recover herself, and exclaimed—

"What tyranny! and this was the man who wished to be—oh!—my—husband!"

She had fainted! And now the other ladies came to her aid, and by salts, &c., she soon recovered. Tears came to her relief.

"Now, Horatio, do promise me to be very cautious in making any new friendships; weigh well the consequences—not only to yourself and sister, but to me."

Suddenly my mother broke forth in that strange, abrupt manner of hers.

"Oh! surely this is another of those plans of my wicked brother! He will destroy me! This, Horatio, has been the cause of all my depressing illness. He is unknown, unseen, supposed dead, yet at intervals these letters arrive. Fortunately, this time in the presence of Ellen.

It is hard to destroy a brother! But he seeks to destroy us all. He will now hang upon your steps, is now, doubtless, near—a gambler—a jockey—an officer in the guards—he will assume every shape; his figure and manners pass him everywhere. Oh! how I pray you may never meet! Be cautious, do, Horatio, for all our sakes, but a few days more and I, lately so anxious for your delay here, will bless the hour of your departure!"

On the following Friday, on visiting the *Diana*, I found her preparing for new masts, which were to be replaced that day alongside the sheerhulk. The order had arrived for commissioning her, and the corvette was alongside her hulk transporting stores. In eight days more I was to be ready to pass, and eleven days after we were to be ready to go out of harbour. That was boys play to our hands; forty-eight hours could send us to sea whenever the captain willed. But we had yet only one lieutenant; who the other two were to be, nobody could guess. Haskins boldly

said, "Fitzjames is your third; at all events, if he is not acting, he will do duty as second in the ship." So thought Fitzjames. The captain was very uneasy about the second, at all events; but he had not to wait long, for to our surprise, John Stuart and Robert Hudson presented their commissions, the former senior to Fitzjames. The captain bit his lip and treated them both very courteously, and told them forty-eight hours hence, or on Monday, he would read them in. Mr. Hudson would appear on Sunday to relieve Mr. Fitzjames, on leave.

On reaching home again, I found from many significant signs that an understanding had been come to between Charlotte and Noble, and that they only waited for 'leave!'

After dinner I first commenced the subject with Ellen, and she agreed entirely with me, that under present circumstances it would be inexpedient; and that until I was of age, no valid arrangements could be made.

CHAPTER X.

THE eventful fifth arrived. Captain Lofty had requested me to take breakfast with him, as he wished to examine my logs, papers, &c., before presenting myself, and before he could conscientiously give me my final certificate. As yet I had only the common servitude document. Having satisfied him, he said, "I have seen logs better kept, but in those cases the officers had more leisure, looked more to effect, and their attention possibly was compulsory. Here is a letter which your passing captains will open; and I trust you will pass your ordeal with credit," shaking me by the hand. I

pushed on to the guard ship and there found three perfect strangers, austere-looking men, and, as I thought, determined to put me to the test.

But to business: the time, logs, and certificates satisfied the examining officers that they were justified in proceeding. There were three of us. Each took one apart. I was taken into the after-cabin.

"You belong to the *Diana*, sir, late of *Amelia*. You will rig and take the *Diana* to Spithead, and moor her; the wind on the latter day being N.E."

This I did satisfactorily.

"Now, sir, you will unmoor, take her out by the Needles, for which I perceive by your journal that you assume some experience, and bring her back to Spithead by the eastward."

This was done, and my captain shook hands and said he would be glad at any time to make room for me as a lieutenant in his ship.

As we returned to the main cabin, I found

the others had been *severely tested*, by asking after their fathers, mothers, sisters, or high connexions!

We received our certificates and were desired to repair to the admiral's office. On deck I found Captain Noble. He had asked to be excused from being one of the examining captains; but he congratulated me most sincerely, informing me that he had specially requested of a friend to press me hard, and he was sure he had done his duty. "Now come along to the admiral."

My reception was flattering; the admiral wished me to dine, but added—

"You are at liberty to decline, as you may prefer to pass this day at home. I shall expect you to dine here on the day on which your captain dines before he quits harbour."

"I shall have great pleasure in obeying your commands, sir." I bowed and retired, and at the customary hour we were on our road to Champion Villa, doctor and Fitzjames in tow.

Charlotte and the captain were now acknowledged friends, but no binding engagement beyond the assurance, on either side, that they would respectively decline any other alliance.

When the following Sunday arrived, everyone seemed to view it with a more than usually solemn feeling—it was our last together, for years perhaps. At four, the captain came out from Portsmouth; his countenance, generally unreadable, now exhibited marked changes—shades of pleasure, doubt, pain, and gratification played alternately, puzzling even Ellen, to whom, I thought, he showed considerable reserve. But I saw that he was acting some part which conflicted with his habits, and calling Captain Noble, he said, "I wish to see you in your room." We did not meet until dinner. Then he was quite himself again, and indeed cheerful.

Dinner passed, and the cloth was removed. The glasses had been sipped to the customary loyal toast—when with one of those dry

unmeaning countenances, which Captain Noble could so well affect, he said, "Madam and reverend sir, I have a letter of some importance to that young man, perhaps you would allow him to explain it himself." And, at the same time, handing to me an official letter. Ellen interrupted us and said—

"Oh! how I do hate those foolscap letters. Do not read it now!"

But Captain Noble observed—"Time is important—and he can explain better now."

"Well, Horatio, I am compelled to consent. No one supports *me*."

Hereupon I cut the paper with the dessert knife.

"Ah!" exclaimed Ellen, "I see you have not forgotten my advice."

To my surprise, it informed me of my promotion, and that I was to apply at the commissioners' office for my commission.

* * * *

"You are now, sir," said Captain Lofty, on the perusal of that document, "the junior-

lieutenant of H.M.S. *Diana* May your future course be as creditable as your probationary has been."

"You, my lieutenant!" exclaimed Captain Noble, with affected surprise. "Well, sir, I hope you will now put off the boy."

"Not until you do, I hope!" exclaimed Captain Lofty.

The ladies retired. Fitzjames pressed one side, Haskins the other, and each read the commission.

"I knew it throughout," said Haskins. "I knew it must be, and my good fellow (sir, I mean, bowing), no one feels more pride in the verification of my great wisdom than your humble servant—but, I fear, never to be your own lieutenant."

Poor fellow, his countenance fell and he coughed, as the doctor said, very unsatisfactorily.

The next morning, I was awoke by Louisa kissing the new lieutenant.

"Are you not ashamed, you puss? An

officer of my age and importance! Get out of my room, I am going to dress!"

She retreated to the door. "Sure, sir, you can't be angry? that bit of parchment does not cover your heart, sir. It does not make you forget us, does it, sir?"

"Oh, no! Louisa, but circumspection. Before witnesses I care not."

"But father is here," and the old man rushed in and pressed my hand, covering it with tears.

"Oh! sir, one favour—the last we shall ever ask."

"Well, proceed."

"Let us see the *Diana*, with all the men and officers assembled, before you sail. The gig's crew have told us such tales—such nonsense about decks cleaner than *my tables!*—fit for a prince to dine off. No, no, Mr. Horatio—we must see that, and I must put on my spectacles too, before I can believe it."

"Well, I promise; but it is not fair to criticise a ship either in harbour or only fourteen

days in commission. But do you just let the lads know you are coming to *inspect*, and I am very much mistaken if they do not make you open your eyes, and believe many far more improbable stories in future."

The captain took me to the admiral, whose pleasure I can only term fatherly. He called me 'his boy,' and his eyes glistened as if he had lost some such lamented pet. But he inquired of Captain Noble when the *Diana* would be ready.

"To-morrow, I think, sir; but Thursday I am informed is fixed for the 'ready for going out of harbour.'"

"You will go out, sir, on Thursday—you will dine with me on Friday—and Saturday's post, I expect, will bring your final orders. This officer knows my wishes; but as he is now a lieutenant, I shall send him an official invitation."

We bowed and retired, went on board, found top-gallant-yards across, decks clean, and Stuart's blue eyes speaking unmistakeably, "I hope this meets approval."

"Give us your hand, Stuart, how I shall grieve to lose you!—here is the junior lieutenant, but as he has no uniform, I cannot read him in, we will defer it all until to-morrow. And now, Stuart, we go out on Thursday—how will the tide suit?"

At noon we lunched on board. The admiral's invitation arrived. I took possession of my cabin, and the second wished to leave. "He would leave when the admiral pleased."

I answered my invitation, we called upon the commissioner, apologized for the intercepted commission, and Captain Noble said—

"This is the second I promised to bring on Thursday; the *Diana* is ready for sea, as far as her captain is concerned," bowing.

"Oh! yes, Noble, it gratifies me exceedingly; when all work so smoothly, the credit is reflected on our department, we feel the compliment and share in it. The peremptory order I have this moment received, that you are to go, wind and weather permitting, to Spithead on Thursday, evinces the determi-

nation of our excellent admiral to make a flaming report."

We parted. My tailor had his hint; all my uniforms were ready, the epaulette had then been added to the uniform; and when I went to try the fit nothing could be more complete.

But other matters had to be settled. The trouble and difficulties of manhood were stealing on me. Deeds were to be signed on my attaining my majority, for the acts of my uncle had rendered investigations necessary, which disclosed more property than even Ellen had been aware of. I was supplied with documents enabling me, if I should be absent, to confirm Ellen as my trustee for the interests of my sister. These things I may explain incorrectly, but such a mass of parchment had to pass before my eyes, that both they and my attention became quite worn out.

The dinner at the commissioner's passed off pleasantly, but very quietly. That at the admiral's was very gay, and I was not without, I trust, some little honest pride at displaying

the uniform of a lieutenant on one of such tender years. Forgive it, reader, it was the result of moral discipline—it was the reward which must, sooner or later, be accorded to it.

But modesty forbids my telling the further public compliments paid me by the kind admiral. One, however, is public property, and that, even at the risk of contempt in my old age, I will not withhold. It was the reading of Lord St. Vincent's private opinion to him of his estimate of my future career.

Why, reader, do I thus act? To excite the present generation to carry back the feelings of "the old war school," to make men fit, even if juniors, to command the British fleet!

These words will arouse many, even Nelson! He cannot be easy in his present cold berth. But to business, still in the presence of ladies. This is what the admiral said: "Ladies and gentlemen, you will excuse a foolish old admiral. (Roars, "Not old, not foolish, a trump.") I have a message, not telegraphic, from one whom we all, at least, revere—another old

chip, like myself. (Great confusion, ladies worse than gentlemen.) Well, this is highly improper; where is the officer of the court." Up started the flag captain,—"Here, sir."

"Pray keep order, while I read Lord St. Vincent's letter."

"DEAR ——,

"You tell me that you have invited young Howard Brenton to dine with you, and that he has now received his commission to the *Diana*. I have not the honour of knowing his captain—a Noble, you tell me. Desire him to come here and prove your words. But this man, capable now of commanding the Channel fleet, tell him that his discretion, his judgment, his secrecy, must gain him the confidence of man, woman, and child. I shall concentrate my whole fire to push that fellow forward.

"Yours, &c.,

"VINCENT."

There was a dead silence. "Produce the culprit. Captains Lofty and Noble, with some

little feeling, led me forward and placed me before the admiral. It would be absurd in me to say more. It was a piece of burlesque, if you please, but it caused many a wet handkerchief; it passed to the hearts of fathers, mothers, and sisters, and for a time, like the seed which fell on good ground, had its influence. How I got home, I cannot relate.

However, time flies; and after the *Diana* was at Spithead, the admiral intimated his intention to inspect her on this day at one. As he left, I thought this would be the time for the servants; she never would be cleaner. And I thought, to myself—'Well this may do some good even to the land-lubbers, when they see how beautifully clean and comfortable a ship of war is.' And as it was very probable we should be paid, and sail possibly that night, all the family were included, and came off in a second barge furnished by the commissioner.

The inspection of such a body of picked men touched up the old admiral.

"I say, Noble, do exchange with me. Really, my young blood is coming back. But I cannot stand it any longer. May you meet an enemy fit to cope with you—that is my best wish. Call on me to-night; you will sail before daylight."

As he went over the side, he whispered, "No cheering, I hate it, as a sign of hollow mouths and hollow hearts—never encourage it. The eyes of your men tell me where their hearts are." Thus quitted this fine officer.

Now the ladies came alongside, and I could see the signal passed fore and aft—captain's intended—old butler—pretty nurse, &c. &c., for I was part and parcel of that crew. As one was my own sister, and the others relatives, I cannot say more.

Leaving them to the captains, I deserted, and escorted the old butler (his daughter sticking to him with almost infantine fear and modesty) and their party round the decks. And, at last, the old man, thinking he had found a defect, put on his spectacles, and

knelt down to examine it, but it was only a rust stain.

At length, drawing a long breath, he exclaimed—

"Well, Mr. Horatio, you beat *us!*"

"But there are no coal fires here, and carpets to catch the dust!" exclaimed Louisa, rather pertly.

"But," said I, "will you take up your carpets, and let us see what is under?"

"No!"

She looked scorpions and scrubbing-brushes.

"I suppose this is the reason you want your hammock-man; you are only spoiled here."

And now, having landed at Portsmouth, and been the guests of Captain Lofty at the 'George,' the parting hour arrived—the more sacred as we advance in life. The captain received his orders, and at eight p.m. we rejoined *Diana* rather lower in spirits. But I cannot quit harbour without relating one fine trait of generous feeling, worthy of old

Bowers. Fitzjames saw the captain would feel loth to part with Stuart. He felt he would cement our happiness; and though, as first lieutenant, he would, of necessity, of right, gain his promotion, he volunteered, if Stuart would remain, he would take the position of second under him. This was arranged and confirmed by the admiral, and, as he said, would be duly reported to the Admiralty and Lord St. Vincent, to whom he looked as the genius still of discipline.

Morning missed *Diana*—she was below the horizon, and the old gunner began to show his significant droll countenance over the main-tack block. Captain Noble was walking with me, rubbing his hands, and shaking his whole frame, as if for exercise, when he made him out.

"Ho! Mr. Briggs, a few words with you. Stuart—where is he?"

"Here, sir."

"Well, Stuart, Briggs knows the humour of this witch. Give him fair play; then you shall try—or any one else that can take her

humour; and, lastly, myself. She has a speed in her, and we must find it soon. They tell me she is given to drink—to go down one dog-watch, and come up the next—and sends her favours aft to the helmsman. Now, I am up to that trick, too, and that shows metal resulting from her fine run. We must keep the bow guns aft until they are wanted."

Up went Briggs' right arm. "That's it, sir—you have hit her—only keep her nose out of water, and she is as fine a lass as ever sat on the ocean."

In twenty-four hours she went through her exercise, and we all felt our appetites return, and our feet in our shoes, as the guns and shifting ballast came aft.

Well, the old game, Brest first. Here we met *Revolutionnaire*—gave her the loose letters, and catch me, if you can, to admiral. Here were many friends; but only those who came to see old friends caught a sight. Despatches exchanged—up went the signal, "Try rate of sailing"—*Revolutionnaire's* pendants

—Did we not make her very giddy before night—out of signal distance in four hours—"Good-bye, my lord."

Now for Basque Roads.

Up went the demand from a frigate—another beauty—the *Belle Poule.* Poor bird! do not ruffle your feathers, we have a new captain, and now it will not do.

"Recal, sir."

"Indeed."

"Do you see the squadron?"

"Yes, sir."

"The flag?"

"Yes, sir."

"Hoist answering pendant—obey both—but hoist 'Charged with despatches.'"

"Admiral has affirmed, sir."

"Steer for him."

"Frigate has fired a gun, sir; so has admiral, and hoisted 'Recal all vessels.'"

"Hoist 'Recal,' and continue gun for gun with admiral."

So we drew in.

"Signal for captain of *Belle Poule.*"

"All right, sir. No doubt, the admiral wishes to see him."

Admiral has hauled down 'Recal.'

"Follow his motions."

Well, the captain waited on the admiral—was very handsomely received, and charged with despatches for Sir Home Popham, supposed to be off Bilboa or Portugalette, near St. Sebastians. Not a pilot on board. No. 2 supernumerary sent to *Belle Poule.* The admiral wished *Belle Poule* to try rate of sailing, but not to interfere with or retard *Diana*—to return to station in twenty-four hours.

This afforded a very smart beat out to round Chasseron, and then six hours off the wind—three a-beam, two on quarter, and one before it.

Very small chickens to boast of, *Belle Poule.* Do not crow—although, to do you justice, you sail well. We only wish you had some other ensign at your peak; and my impression is, that all those flying kites would prove

your ruin! Pretty as you are, we dusted your feathers, and you went back to say you 'never got within hail.' We had no flying kites, but sailed ready for instant action—stays snaked—stopped at every three fathoms—back stays the same—chains aloft—everything about as ready—only to beat to quarters. But a well-prepared ship never is fortunate, excepting the *Shannon*. But there were numerous *Shannons*—but none lucky enough 'to teach the young ideas how to shoot.' Even his noble consort, *Tenedos*, could not find a mate. She would have told a very similar tale, I suspect.

But to our own business. We were on a strange coast; no pilot, and charts indifferent. As to in-shore work—as to sounding—it was look aloft for cliffs first, and think of soundings when the anchor was ready to let go. The wind and weather favoured us, and we made the land near Machicaco, if I err not; finding *Venerable*, *Diadem*, *Surveillante*, &c., at anchor off Portugalette, as the anchorage

near Bilboa is termed. Here we joined Sir Home Popham, and first saw his signals displayed in demanding our number, which we instantly answered with the old flags. This was followed by 'Whence come you?" Reply, 'Portsmouth, Brest, Basque Roads.'

The captain waited on him, was invited to dinner, and learning that the junior lieutenant was the signal officer *pro tem*, I was also invited, not without some misgiving. But Sir Home was a very deep thinking man, always inclined to attach any one he thought would serve his purpose, and, therefore, very anxious to induce me to join the *Venerable*. But *Diana* had more charms for me. We were supplied with the new flags and signal book, invented by Sir Home, and, to render us still more alert, made repeating ship. This, unfortunately, made me a prisoner, as there was no one else to whom the captain would trust our newly-won credit. Therefore, until I saw Sir Home on the move, I never visited the shore.

Many sharp things now took place; landing and embarking guns and men, and the neat capture of Gataria. But venerable Sir Home gave way to smart Sir George Collier; and after a short cruize sweeping forty leagues west of Cape St. Vincent, and daily crossing the tracks of French frigates all the way up the Bay of Biscay, where they were being taken by heavy, dull cruizers, and almost by eighteen-gun brigs; we found ourselves one morning in 1814, in chase off the Scilly Islands, dead to the westward. Three days did we stick to this phantom without losing sight, and whether she went down or not, no one can tell. She mysteriously ran against a fog-bank, as the boatswain had it, and was swamped. She was, apparently, a very large corvette, hove guns, spars, and every available object overboard; and as a fearful westerly gale succeeded, and we got well to windward and searched down south-easterly, until we reached smooth water without a trace, I believe that she must have foundered.

It is melancholy even to lose an enemy thus, but she, no doubt, meditated greater misery to individuals on our own beloved coasts. Our cruize was to continue to the extent of our provisions, and these we took care to replace by homeward-bound cruizers, touching at the Azores, Madeira, and Teneriffe, until the early part of the year, when we met a French ship of the line and a frigate, under the Drapeau Blanc, off Cherbourg, and led them into Spithead in very nasty weather, the *Colosse*, I think, with an admiral's flag.

We were signalled to keep underweigh, and no communication allowed; then there was a signal for captain. He left, and I had some surmise that this might relate to my humble self. On the return of the captain it was evident that some one was sought; he never told who.

Now we retired to study our letters, peace with France, and other exciting news—too common at that period. The captain sent to speak with me, and I then learned that we were off to Newfoundland with the spring con-

voy, and were to await the old *Bellerophon*, Sir Richard Keats, at Torbay, acting whipper-in until they arrived.

We reached Torbay the next morning, and our first acquaintance with peaceable France was commenced by boarding a fishing boat, swarming with men, women, and boys, out for mackerel, of which we took all they would spare, paying them pretty handsomely. The next day, the admiral came bowling down with a huge convoy and several other vessels of war, one commanded by Captain A'Court, a friend of our captain. For some special reason the captain took me with him, and I there met three or four more of the Halifax cruizers, one as flag captain. The fish were acceptable, and we passed out Channel.

If there is any one duty more tedious than another, it is whipping up a convoy, and this seemed to be our sole occupation; and not very polite answers to our exhortations, 'to make more sail,' oozed out. I suppose the character of Captain Noble had been estimated as able

to stand all this, for I believe few other men could have withstood what he did with such cool effrontery.

Two masters he had brought on board wild as lions when hailed, but before they got up the side it is extraordinary how cool they were, and how they began to smooth down their locks and wipe their foreheads with their pocket-handkerchiefs as they stood on each side confronted with each other, no one taking the slightest notice of them. Several times as the officer of the watch, purposely or not I cannot say, sharply called—"Send the boatswain's mate here—see that those boats have good tow ropes," these great men quailed as if they imagined they were going to be flogged; at length Captain Noble came up.

"Where are these gentlemen?"

They both advanced, hats in hand.

"Put your hats on, men, what are you afraid of—what have you done to make you look so miserable?"

One looked, the other bit his nails, screwed

his foot about and round his leg, and then said—"Made ourselves a pair of fools, I suppose." The other jumped to the same conclusion as he repeated the signal—"Yes, sir, that is the truth."

"Well, I am glad you are satisfied, for it saves me a deal of trouble; I intended merely to take you to Sir Richard Keats, he is a fine, warm-hearted creature. But I do not think he would be pleased to see you without your vessels. Take my friendly advice, make all sail and join him, and if you should want my assistance, I will tow you both up."

"Thank ye, sir, I dare say we may get on now the water is smoother."

They were never near the *Diana* afterwards.

It was reported that an American privateer got into the convoy one night, and narrowly escaped being taken by one of the corvettes, which completely disguised herself, by hanging a large black canvass patch to her third reef, in imitation of the convoy. We chased one off for two days, but lost her at night, probably by

her furling all. At the Great Bank we parted company, going on with the convoy, for Halifax, and after asking leave of Captain Noble, caught several cod. He humorously said, "Well, Howard, I will accept one, but do you recollect this time six years, how many changes since then!" We soon made Sambro Light, and got our small convoy in, with the *Wolverine* and *Cormorant*.

CHAPTER XI.

HALIFAX was much changed, the American war had caused money to flow more freely, but not, that I could learn, to any good purpose. The same bells were ringing, but no one went to church; and all the joyous innocence and freedom of younger days now had ceased. I found the same warm hearts, perhaps warmer; I was more at home, but I was more cautious; it was that chilling change from boyhood to manhood. But my enjoyments, on the other hand, were more rational, and my friendships firmer. I had then only boyish gratitude to return for the obligations I

had incurred, I now enjoyed the friendship and confidence of the same individuals, was ever the welcome guest, more affectionately caressed, if such a term could apply, and had my own modes of finding out how I could repay some of the attentions.

It was well known that I was likely to inherit a fine fortune, but if this had any effect, it was rather repulsive to the fair dames of Nova Scotia. I never fell in with any scheming mamma there, and on several occasions, when I reproached the daughters with coldness, I was answered simply, that we were then wild boys and girls in Paradise, but that my position made me more inaccessible than others.

I began this chapter with the full intention of giving my readers some information respecting their old acquaintances, Anne, Bessie, and Rose, but some personal and family considerations prevent me, on re-consideration, from saying more than that they were all three happily married. I will, therefore, conclude the chapter with a short account of the gunnery

practice which took place on the homeward voyage. We had frequent quarters, exercising with shot at barrels, not on the broadside, but obliquely ahead, obliquely astern, in the act of tacking or wearing, cool musket practice through the ports, previous to every discharge of the gun. Constant reference to a plan on the quarter-deck, where a table was placed and diagrams of what was done—explained to the men—well-timed commendation when the cask was lectured on, placed on its float on the quarter deck. Thus—

"Now, my lads, had this been an enemy's rudder, as exposed as our own, and we could only have got as near as we did to this unfortunate cask—what a condition she would have been in—here are three under water-line shots—probably three on each side of it, six—four or five above it—say ten out of our thirteen long guns of one broadside, which would have spoiled his steerage. And now let us see what the marines have been about. Count the holes, sergeant."

"Twenty-one in all, sir—all dead men, sir," standing like a ramrod, with his hand to his cap.

"Now, sergeant—we will throw over two dozen bottles scattered, we will carry the ship up to them as enemies, you will instruct your men, at each port, which bird they are to select so that no two shall waste their powder."

Over went two dozen '*marines.*' The ship was cautiously steered and as the captain held up his hand seven were smashed. At three rounds four bottles remained. The men were again summoned.

"Now, my lads, if the enemy had been alongside and the marines could only see the white of their eyes how many guns would they have loaded?—how many rammers lost overboard? Never care for quick firing—follow up the musketry with the long gun, and select particular objects. Three well-directed guns on *one* will dismount it, or the glance shot will commit dreadful havock—therefore never dream of driving your shot into the enemy's

muzzle—it does no good, does not pass inside the ship, and is lost.

"And in boarding, be as sly and cautious as if you were about to surprise a tiger. The very feint at boarding is intended to expose you to their concealed marksmen. And if it be requisite to let them in board, in order to punish them and kick them overboard again, *let it be done in order.* If you fall back out of order, the punishment intended for their temerity may fall upon you. The two light guns on the quarter-deck, loaded with pistol-balls and commanding each side—the clear passages left for the main-deck marksmen—are intended for the amusement *'of visitors'*—therefore, if boarders do not retreat in prescribed order they must share with the enemy. It may be my trick, by very close steerage, to play this game and deprive him of some twenty or thirty men, but I must depend fully on you to pitch them, dead or alive, overboard!"

One long-teethed straight-haired fellow, the

captain of the forecastle, the leader of the men for fun or fight, took off his hat, held on by one of his forelocks, and said,

"Bless your heart, sir, if these men, headed by you, and supported by such officers as we have, and just knowing *where* and *how* we are to fall when killed, are taken into action, and told your wishes, it will be the cheapest action ever fought. Lock the magazine—give us our ten rounds—and we will maul the enemy, if so be he is not better handled, and up to our moves, in less than twenty minutes."

"I believe you, my lads. To your quarters and secure guns—beat retreat"—all followed—one pipe—'clear decks'—and before noon all was clear again. But the men never were harassed at needless quarters—at morning and evening parade they stood to their guns as they had been drilled, privately, by an artillery sergeant, who had the *Amelia's* portion in hand lately, at Halifax."

These quarter-days, once a week, were converted into a species of amusement—only a

certain number of rounds fired, and the result of every gun was noted. The ship now on these occasions manœuvred by the captain, as no one could tell what he was about against a visionary enemy (the *Cask*) running up under great way. "Heave all aback, starboard the helm"—"brace sharp after yards"—place forges ahead—"quick weather-head braces man"—"look out—fire—square head-yards—ease jib sheet—weather guns—look out—aft jib sheet—square after yards, gent——ly—fire—fill head-sails—ease jib-sheet—downhelm—stand by port guns—give it her again.—Hard up, master—square all—look out for his jib-boom—can't steer all right—luff to and keep on her weather bow, master, but be cautious, don't let her get off the wind, and show her broadside bows.—Now we have her—she's done—wear past her bows, and tickle her stern again." How many rounds, Stuart?—Five, sir—"Secure—pick up target"—and no mistake—five rounds had left not a stave but what were picked up floating—aud the raft cut to pieces;

and where would the enemy be with sixty-five 24-pound shot holes under his counter, independent of any upper-deck 32's and long nines?"

Captain Noble said—"Well, I would take a good licking, to try the experiment of how she would like this repeated, if she did not make her bow and try her heels."

But it was not on the cards that we should find an antagonist, so we ran off New London—fell in with Sir H. Hotham, the man I so much longed to become acquainted with —made his friendship, and off we started for England. The war was over, and all our splendid manœuvring damped. Will I be believed? for I have reason to know. The Government of that day did not more than *coldly approve* of the discipline of that frigate, —the *Serpent*—nor any of the crack ships of that station. Captain Noble *then* proposed to establish his gunnery ship. The Government replied—"Sir H. D., Sir T. H., and Sir. G. C., have *their plans;* when they have been tried, we will entertain yours!"

CHAPTER XII.

As I am not attempting to write a detailed account of my life at sea, I will simply state that almost immediately after we arrived at Portsmouth, we were off again, no one knew where.

Fifty leagues S. W. of Scilly, the orders were opened; we shaped our course for the Mediterranean, and reached Gibraltar in seven days. There we received fresh orders "to look into Toulon, examine state of enemy, and rejoin at an appointed rendezvous."

Here was war again with our old foe, and apparently all to do over again. I think

it was off Civita Vecchia, that we fell in with the squadron, and moved on for Naples. Five sail of the line, and the customary proportion of frigates and brigs. Here we found a line-of-battle ship, and frigate, with the flag-of-truce flying on board *Tremendous* and *Alcmene*, also a Neapolitan ship-of-the-line, their prize, we understood. But the admiral, Sir Edward Pellew, annulled truce, the ships of the line took up their stations, and a fresh game was played, in which, however, none of us shared prize-money. The *Tremendous* and *Aclmene*, I believe, got the loaves and fishes.

This game ended, the squadron were variously scatterred, but had not much to do, except *Malta* and *Berwick*, and a very powerful flotilla, which continued investing Gaeta, until they, with seven or eight thousand Austrians, spoiled it as a place of antiquity, for ever. Nor did they finish it, until the news of the battle of Waterloo left no pretence for further resistance.

Murat, too, had been rather summarily

tried, "or shot and tried afterwards," as Jack had it, and there was, therefore, no further ground for maintaining it against the king of Naples.

After visiting nearly every port in the Mediterranean, having a finger in every pie, and occasionally enjoying ourselves in this beautiful climate, we eventually assembled at Marseilles. There I made the acquaintance of Toup Nicholas, the pilot who so gallantly fought the *Legère*, and made her take to her heels, to take refuge in a French port. For this he was promoted, and his master made a lieutenant, but why it stopped there, no one has divulged.

Our stay here was perhaps one of the pleasantest, for its duration, that I can call to mind. With the captains of the squadron, Captain Noble soon made me acquainted, and in proportion as he was esteemed by the admiral and others, I felt the effects of the sunshine. Some very excellent men were collected in that squadron, and if fighting had

been the game, I suspect no equal force could have turned us, and two to one, would not have been joyfully accepted.

But it was not our fortune. We had nibbles, but never a chance for a bite, and my idea, that I was to carve a name for myself before I dreamed of marrying, seemed now more remote than ever. I had almost resolved not to accept my commission until I had earned it, but alas! greediness whispered, "take all you can get, never consent to become a beggar."

One day the captain came on board suddenly.

"Up anchor."

"Most of the officers on shore, at some entertainment, sir."

"How unfortunate, I cannot bear that blue peter. Well, Stuart, get underweigh we will give the blades a fright."

In a few minutes we stood well out in sight of the town, and we loitered, admiral signalled, "Any accident?"

We replied, "Officers missing."

This had the desired effect, the *Boyne* blazed away, and off came our officers in one of the boats of the squdron, saving us the trouble, the captain retiring to let Stuart give them their chocolate, which was pretty well churned with the milk of human kindness.

At Gibraltar, we had leave to be petted by the good commissioner and his amiable lady; met the *Aigle*, I think, and *Elizabeth*; and forward we went for 'England home and beauty.' The two former had charms, but as for the latter—why my heart was whole. I knew not how this could be, nor did I care to inquire.

"I think," said I, to myself, "I shall instruct Ellen to seek for me the counterpart of herself. One that knows she is a woman, and knows now where my quickness of perception fails to render her heart to me alone so legible, that like the sister prompting the younger brother in secret whispers, I may enact my part properly, and repay her in love. One who can in the purity of the marriage vow be mine alone, can implicitly believe that

I could do no wrong, and could spurn from her even her kindred, if they ventured to meddle with our happiness; and could feel this heroic love free from jealousy—that sin —that degrading blot which severs more affections than any other detested vipers, and which once entwined never can be unwound —which lays open the eyes, as it did that of Cain, first parent to a worldly woe!—distorts acts of charity—of friendship—of confidence —lays the stepping-stone to separation, and hurries the infatuated victim into sins of the first magnitude!

No! none of this, but the enduring love and confidence which render the return natural, irresistible, overwhelming bliss! Without these, rather should my heart be barren than cursed with the smooth-tongued oily serpent, who would entwine itself around my heart and suck its secrets, merely to paint you a demon blacker than her beauty would lead you to suspect.

* * * * *

Onward we flew; and as we boarded each successive outward bound, no longer requiring convoy, the stirring events of the last war gradually became unfolded, and prepared us for the latest in England.

On reaching Spithead, we were still detained—no hurry to pay off; and, much to the gratification of us all, we learned of the promotion of Fitzjames.

Captain Lofty was in town, but would be down the moment our arrival was notified. The happy family were unfortunately at the Rectory. But a letter informed me that the legal man would call on me, at Portsmouth, or wherever I might be, for my signature to certain papers—that Captain Lofty had secured a house in London—and that, if I visited town, I would find my rooms ready, and the servants in possession—Bruton-street, Grosvenor-square. Captain Lofty had rooms in the same street, for Captain Noble and himself. Not a word about my uncle.

We paid off at Portsmouth, the greater

part of the men having a rendezvous in Portsmouth, and another at Plymouth, by which they might find us when their money was spent. This was at their express request, as they then jocosely observed—"Some of us will tumble together yet, and we will all enter for one ship, if we can—a guardo—with the chance of volunteering out for active service."

Our receptions were as per last by the admiral and commissioner; and this was our parting for ever!

On arrival in London, I found the family settled and very comfortable; Ellen unaccountably softened—painfully so. I thought her unwell, and was, perhaps, more officious, more inclined to ask reasons than she was apparently willing to answer. Her quiet reply was—"All in good time, my dear Horatio; I have much to think about—much to perplex; and too many at one skein of silk generally makes worse confusion. Patience!"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE acceptance and ratification of the agreement between Noble and Charlotte, were at length duly recognized by the family, and the final ceremonies were to take place as soon as I could fairly understand my position.

The meeting of lawyers took place one forenoon, about ten o'clock, and continued for five successive days. Our plans of counties, copies of records, special estates, for which solicitors were ready to tender acknowledgment to me as rightful owner, and held by leases by their clients at different period extending from

thirty to forty years, assured me of a property of £7000 per annum. Other estates, if so willed by me, were to pass to my sister, securing in such case £2000 per annum, and a comfortable house and manorial rights—or right of shooting over a vast extent. These would, if assigned by me, deprive me of the right to the Brenton arms, but would not bar my succession to the estates of two uncles, missing in India.

"And now, sir," said Mr. Deedes, when I had arranged what property was to be settled on Charlotte, "your *ci devant* guardian has afforded me such an insight into your character that when she prophetically foretold to me the events of this day, I presumed to draw out the marriage settlements; and, therefore, if you please, the day may be fixed for the fourteenth day after her residence in this locality."

"Well, my dear sir, this accords perfectly with my ideas, and if you are not too happy at home, will you add to our happiness more,

by making yourself the grand organ for our evening's amusement. No promises—go home and ask your wife, and if she frowns, bring her too. Obey the last order is our rule."

He bowed very low.

"*I* obey."

Now I knew not whether he was married, and as we quitted the room Ellen pressed my arm, and said—

"My dear Horatio, how could you be so cruel! His wife is a termagant, a very handsome, commanding woman, but despises the calling of her husband.

"Now you have a game to play. You must exert yourself, as man never yet surpassed you. Pay great attention to the wife, and do, dear Horatio, if you have the soul which I believe would burst its bounds in a just cause, make her feel that it arises from the great respect we have for the profession of the husband. You may, on such an occasion, travel into the regions of metaphor, whilst keeping within those of truth."

"Well, but," said I, "this is a ticklish game! Suppose I should make a mistake—the lawyer fancy I was in earnest—the lady take a liking to me, and thus out of good intentions, produce one of those effects which even astonish on the stage!"

"In a good cause, Horatio, with an honest heart and honest intentions, you may safely leave events to fate."

"Well, I should be sorry to make matters worse, but I will '*Try.*'

"And now for Charlotte, how I long to see that dear creature happy, and to call Noble brother! father would be more appropriate, if he were not such a boy!"

Ellen observed—

"Twelve months hence, mark me, Horatio! he will be very much changed—only fit to wind silk."

"Then I expect to be tried by a court-martial for desertion! But come along, Ellen, let us seek them."

"Here they both come, looking very serious—assume the same tone."

"Anything the matter, Charlotte, dear?"

"No, Horatio; but—— but —— Do, Captain Noble, help me?"

"When I have the *power*, Charlotte, I will."

"That is just what I mean; but you will not speak out."

"Well," I said, "perhaps Noble, as he has not the power, will let me have you to myself, or to ourselves, Ellen and myself, for a few minutes."

Upon this — touching his forehead — he said—

"Captain Noble will walk the quarter-deck until he is summoned."

And he continued pacing the corridor.

"Well, Charlotte, we have just left the musty parchments, and I have not yet lost the unpleasant fumes of my old grandfather. I think he must have smoked 'Virginny' pretty considerably."

"Or his law-clerks," Ellen interposed, bowing rather solemnly.

"Well, Charlotte, we must now approach the business part of the transaction. You and Noble are to be married, and in a great hurry, as I take it to be so. But I have some feelings also. I am to be left alone in the world. Now, I have been thinking very seriously of this. Do not sit there, like a culprit; come and let me feel you are still the warm-hearted sister. (This was effectually executed!) Now you and Noble, of course, have a competency; and I should like to know what I am to add to this competency, to make you comfortable, and bring your children up as become my relationship."

"Well, Horatio, and Ellen, when Captain Noble formally proposed to me, I told him I might be portionless, or the turn of fortune might afford us house expenses—no more."

"'Well, Charlotte,' he said, 'I have my captain's pay, and a trifle prize-money, unsullied reputation, and, perhaps, this right arm may carve out better fortunes hereafter. I have a father—his fortunes are blasted. I

have uncles and aunts—but to crutches I never trust. If you think we could buffet the world in spite of all difficulties, I do not know of any faults, just now, that render me unworthy.'

"'Oh, I am yours, if you will not think I have been too forward. Better go through the world with you in mediocrity; for you, dearest Ellen, had assured me I should not feel the want of means, than be the wife of the proudest noble. Instead of kissing me, *as I thought he might have done*, he started back, and said—

"'Well! it is dangerous to be too near you. See Ellen, and let me know my fate.'

"Well, Ellen," I said, "shall I call the prisoner in?"

"Yes."

He entered, very stately, very high-minded and independent, and commenced—

"Possibly I may be allowed to open this debate; I come here to offer myself, singly and solely a post-captain, unsullied and untarnished,

as the husband of your excellent sister. I hold out no false colours, I have nothing but my pay, and if I thought your sister had more than putting that and that together, I should feel humiliated by seeking an alliance far above my deserts." He bowed, and sat down.

"Captain Noble, my esteemed friend, and, I hope, brother, when it was my good fortune to know you, I thought you a troublesome customer. You improved upon acquaintance, and you made me feel your value. I increased in years, you unaccountably got younger. Instead of being old Noble, you are now boy Noble, and a noble fellow that sister of mine foolishly thinks you to be. I know you, and well; I have watched you closely, and the only question in my mind, is, whether we are not honoured in the alliance; for George the third told a peer, the father of lady E. H.——,who opposed his daughter's marriage, 'That a post-captain was a match for any peer's daughter,'" and insisted on that marriage, which proved happy.

Mr. and Mrs. Deedes came to dinner in the evening, and I rushed forward on their arrival, with all due decorum, to receive the very handsome Mrs. Deedes, and both were in high feather. As for poor little Deedes, he was in the tenth heaven! Well, of course I took Mrs. Deedes down to dinner, and she was placed on my right, Ellen on my left, my mother, for the first time, taking the head of my table.

I lost no time in commencing my task.

"Really, Mrs. Deedes, this is very kind of you! but your good husband must have many opportunities of touching the hearts of those to whom he is a kind of second parent, and their grateful feelings must bring you frequently to a knowledge of the reality of his true value, and you must frequently be invited to grace his triumphs?"

"No, indeed, Mr. Howard, it is seldom that we appear in company together."

"Then his business must be very extensive, and he, perhaps, labouring night and day for your future comfort and luxury; he wastes

the midnight oil in devotion to business, not unmindful of the treasure which anxiously awaits his return."

"Indeed, sir! How can you know anything about it?"

"I know nothing—but having the pleasure of the company of Mr. Deedes—judging from what I can only contemplate as a beautiful reality. Looking to the joy which pervaded his countenance when he accepted my invitation, and was desired, 'without fail, to bring his wife,' I can only judge of his feelings by what I should estimate his idea of being proud of his wife would naturally lead any one to suspect. On rejoining the ladies, I re-commenced,

"Oh, my dear Mr. Deedes! I do feel so happy to see you now in my own house—mine by your honourable and powerful exertions; and I sincerely trust that now you have broken ground, been formal guests, you may steal time to throw overboard some little business for fair recreation of mind as well as body."

"Well, sir, I will endeavour. But, sir, to be candid—if we do not work for our ease now, my wife may feel the want of it hereafter." (Her eyes met mine.)

"Oh, but, my good lady, that is easily managed, when man and wife understand each other well. He places her in the society where he should move, and her interests soon become his—and who can resist when both thus act together?"

The lady became very thoughtful; Ellen closed and followed up the action in her own feminine style; and both withdrew to the further corner of the room.

Mr. Deedes exclaimed—

"What have you been saying to my wife? I never saw her so completely dumbfounded; she is generally the loudest in company, and unbearable. You have made a woman of her. I think I must draw up a legal transfer" (laughing).

"No, no, my good fellow! Promise to breakfast with me to-morrow, and let me be your lawyer and physician."

"Wheugh!"—drawing a long breath—"I must ask leave!"

"No! you must break your bonds. Promise!"

"I do, cost what it may! I shall only say 'business.'"

Between Ellen, Charlotte, and Fanny, aided by the elders, poor Mrs. Deedes was bewildered. Frequently I detected her glance watching her husband and myself, and, at a signal from Ellen, we both joined.

Ellen then observed—

"Well, Mrs. Deedes, I hope you will not shut up your good Deedes in his tin-box. He is an old friend of mine, and I intend to turn over a new leaf. When he comes to visit me, he must bring you, or you must consent to his remaining during my pleasure."

"And mine!" exclaimed every one else in the room.

Tea being served, we retired to the back drawing-room; and then, the documents relating to Charlotte and Noble having been

duly read in full court the period was fixed at eight days hence.

Charlotte declined a carriage or any unnecessary superfluous trappings, until they had visited the new place, and ascertained their wants.

Champion Cottage was allotted to them for six months, which I now found to be my property, although laid out entirely at Ellen's expense. Her fortune, although great, no one could arrive at—all was still in mystery. The mysterious packet, on being opened, contained nothing worth record; merely referring to the estates—now recovered—then in Chancery, and the enactments requiring Ellen's approbation to my succession, *if any property accrued.*

Ellen condescended to hold of me, on condition of keeping up the establishment in its former state, Champion Villa, and being treated there as the presiding regent, so long as she might remain single.

The morrow came; Deedes appeared at breakfast, and we were proceeding to business,

when he requested to have a little conversation in private. He then informed me that he perceived some little interference in his family affairs. He paused. At length, he got headway again, and said—

"Well, some men would be bumptious; but I have turned it well over in my mind, and set it down as one of the manœuvres of that wonderful woman, Ellen. She must have put you into full possession of the misery of my life; and if the result of last night is to be the prelude to a favourable change, I shall have to bless her for it."

"Well, Mr. Deedes—few words, and to the point.—I think you are a sensible man; your wife wants more of your society. We will prepare the way for associating her with your interests, and when you see your course clearly, mind your steerage; the recovery of the heart of your wife is worth ten times its first capture."

"You throw a good broadside, my young friend," and he grasped my hand, fervently.

The curate and his brother had returned to Ashdown Vale. I could not make out whether both or either of them had proposed to Fanny, and been rejected; but, at any rate, they were very lucky in not having Fanny for a companion through this thorny world. She never would stoop to be the wife of any man of less intellect than her own, and she was in no way calculated for the wife of a clergyman, or half-pay commander, with no further chance of active life.

In the afternoon, poor Louisa came to me, to know the news, and sat a long time in my study, pondering very seriously how Charlotte would manage for an attendant, for, said she, "I cannot find any one I would trust. Pray, Mr. Horatio, do ask for me to go, it will be only for a few weeks, and then some one else can be found. I can find a servant from home to take my place here. Do speak to Miss Ellen."

I promised to to so.

"And now, sir, surely you intend to follow the good example."

"No, Louisa, I have many dreary years yet to wait."

CHAPTER XIV.

My readers will kindly imagine Charlotte and Noble happily married, and sufficient time to have elapsed to enable them to become comfortably settled in their new home.

* * * *

One day Ellen made me all misery.

"Oh, Horatio, here is another of those provoking foolscap letters, it bodes evil, I detest its very cover."

"Well, we will soon see."

It was a mandate to join the *Granicus* immediately, and to repair to the commissioner's office, at Plymouth, for my appointment.

"How tedious, Horatio, but we must submit. I know your laws well enough, but you have time yet to see your friend at the Admiralty, and ascertain your latest moment."

"Good!" and off I went.

At the Admiralty all was confusion. I sent my card up, and although there were fifty waiting, as I was "in commission," I was ushered up without delay.

"Sit down, Howard; you have heard of this Algerine bubble, it may not turn out anything, but I thought you ought to go, and Lord St. Vincent thinks you have no business on shore until you are posted. You are at present supernumerary in *Granicus*, but it depends very much on Lord Exmouth, whether he may not wish to have you with him. Your captain is my intimate friend. You can hold on in London, if business *requires*, for I know you are not idle, and by a daily call here, you may be useful."

As I rejoined the waiting-room, it was crammed, so was the hall and great yard, one

would have imagined an invasion, or another war.

But on visiting the clerks, I met with several friends, old and distinguished officers, who had declined commands, under the impression that it would not be worth the expense of fitting, merely for a few weeks, and that no action, with so small a force, could possibly take place.

I was strongly commended for my zeal; introduced to the senior naval lord, and bore a letter from him to the port admiral and general.

Ellen and the rector were inclined to visit Devonshire, and I cheerfully accepted their companionship. We started with a beautiful summer's day, and reached Bath comfortably that night, remained until next day at noon, then on to Exeter, where we slept, and took it easily next day, getting strawberries at Ivy Bridge, where we strolled about, awaiting horses, and took up our quarters at Goude's Royal Hotel, at Plymouth Dock, close to the gates.

Before I found the captain, one of his officers, an old ship-mate, found me.

"Oh! you are to join us, how lucky! Here is the captain."

I was introduced.

"Never mind commission or uniform, where do you hang out?"

"Here, sir, at Goude's."

"All right, I want to see you alone."

So I took him into our room, and having introduced him there, Ellen carried off the rector, and the captain and I were left to ourselves.

The captain bit his lip, smiled, and, showing his teeth, said—

"Not married?"

"No, sir."

"Not your sister?"

"No, sir."

"Too young to be your mother. Who is she, sir?"

"My guardian, sir."

"Better say guardian angel, sir. No shot

will ever strike you while that 'cherub sits up aloft.' But, business—business, sir. You served with Lofty, and last with Noble?"

"Yes, I had that honour."

"There you are right—those cards tell trumps. But the crew of the *Diana* are kicking about here, waiting for *you*. Who are you, to have ships' companies dodging your heels? But to the point. It puzzles me, they will all want to enter for us, and I have not sufficient vacancies. You might join one of the line-of-battle ships, and take them; but I want you, and I want some of them. Now, my friend E—— would take some of mine, and some of *Diana's*, and we might take the best into us."

I replied—

"Easily managed; if you only arrange, they can go to one ship. I can select your part easily. Will you see Captain E——? and I will appear ship-shape very soon."

"Come along; I can take your arm in plain clothes better, you know, than in uni-

form. We will get your commission, and meet E—— at the admiral's office. To-morrow will be time enough to show in harness. I am afraid some of your fellows will be nabbed.'

"Not they, sir! And here comes one of them!"

I advanced to meet him.

"God bless you, Mr. Howard! Where *did you* come from? Won't there be a pretty turn-up in North Corner-street, to night! Well, sir, we hear that you join the *Saucy Granny*."

"Well, perhaps, I do, but keep the men together, and I wish the principal leaders to see me to-night, at Goude's. Not more than four; and, mum! no noise—you may do me harm."

"Never fear the old *Diana's*, sir—all right!" —and he scuttled away.

"Why, Mr. Howard, what a pity they do not ship the other swab, and give you a frigate! On my honour, I would resign in your favour, if it were possible."

I bowed. We moved on, and met Captain

E——, who let us understand the admiral wanted us. "Yes, that must be Mr. Howard." The captains immediately understood each other — arranged affairs — Captain E—— saying—

"Well, I have orders to 'enter all I can get' for the Portsmouth ships; but this shall be attended to—they shall not separate."

The admiral, it appears, expected me a day sooner, and was not so well pleased at my plain clothes. But the captain said it was his fault—he thought it better to secure his object.

"Your fault, yes, always make it out *oo* fault, just like *oo*." Is this Mr. Howard?"

"Well, Sir John, it is; and he will, I think, satisfactorily place the *Diana* men, if you will allow me to discharge some few of mine, into one of the other line-of-battle ships. Captain E. will then take the rest, without dividing them, which seems to be their humour."

"Dividing, sir,—don't like it—looks like mutiny, too many men clinging together; no

—no—won't—wait. Mr. Sconce, can we authorize Captain ——to discharge any of his men into another ship, if he fills up with the *Dianas?*"

"Oh, anything just now, Sir John. Lord Exmouth is doing the same, entering men here in one ship in excess, to take them out when he arrives."

"Oh, very good, don't lose any time, Mr. Sconce, seamen very slippery, no impressment now." Then addressing me—

"And so *oo* name Horatio Howard Brenton?"

"Was, Sir John, and is still, in the navy. But I have no further title to Brenton; my sister and Captain Noble have carried that off with the estates."

"Noble taken a prize, a galleon? Capital! and his wife is your sister? Then sir, your captain and *oo* will dine with me to-morrow."

We bowed, and departed. The captain telling me I was a prisoner, until he saw me next morning.

That night, two boatswain's mates, two

quarter-masters, and my hammock-man saw me in a lower room. I explained to them the impossibility of their all joining us, and that I had made arrangements for some going to the ship of Captain E.

"Lord, sir, they have been deceiving you, we are but a handful here. One pipe, sir, would bring them all from Portsmouth, but they await your orders, or those of Captain Noble, who has the others hanging on, as he says, until he knows how you are sitivated. I hope, sir, fifteen or twenty may be stowed in the *Granny*."

"Well, my lads, I suppose you will let me advise you. Captain E. is very much liked, and I like that ship—possibly may have to join her. But let me know the names of all to-morrow at eight, and I will do my best to get you all with me; the rest where I can find them, if wanted."

"All right, sir," and off they went, having wherewith to make themselves comfortable.

As I entered the room, Ellen said—

"Well! you truant, how came you to turn us out so abruptly; I wanted to see more of that good-natured captain, what a happy smile he has."

The commission had been taken up for me, and at breakfast, next morning, was brought to me by the captain's clerk who was ordered to put himself under my orders, and that I was selected for the duty of entering men for general service.

I never can forget the delicious hours I passed in selecting my old Dianas. I had a word for every one in that happy small family, and each had a word for me. The confidence of women may gratify some feelings, but the confidence of such a body of men, had in it a charm never to be experienced twice, perhaps, in the life of a man—particularly when that man is a seaman and more fickle generally than woman.

The *Superbs* asked to put in a word to help the rendezvous, and, as I knew of no better judges of what was wanted and what they could do, I promised.

And Fitzalan, the chief boatswain's mate, said,

"Only a few words, sir, to settle this affair properly. Be kind enough to let the hearties know, at Portsmouth, how the wind blows—and if they do not meet us on the batteries of Algiers they are not the men we knew. To-night, sir, we give our parting ball, sir, by your permission. But we go on board to show ourselves at once. Mr. Horn, of the *Superb*, has seen the forty thieves already, and likes their cut prodigiously. I knew him before, when he was more shakey on those neat blue gaitered legs of his. But I tell no tales."

So we parted, quietly as we entered, giving the landlord strict injunctions to keep a steady house, and that I should reckon with him if I heard of any misdeeds.

As we walked up the street with the second-lieutenant (Johnson), he said,

"Well, we never know when we go too fast or too slow. I would have given eighty more men to secure those forty thieves, as Fitzalan humorously called them. And yet, perhaps,

Howard, these, after all, are not the picked men."

"No! just the average."

"How unfortunate you never had an enemy to cope with!"

"Yes, under Captain Noble—for no action would have been fought. It was calculated to ten rounds per gun and lock the magazine."

"Well, I have heard that story, and disbelieved it. But you must promise to tell it to Captain Cleverty when I am present, it must be not only amusing but highly instructive."

"Well, it could only be done by a man of the peculiar habit, and I would say, original drollness of Captain Noble. He would concentrate the souls of those men into a broadside. It was captain, officers, and crew spun up into a rope in which no sand found a resting place. But we shall have some exercising days, and possibly, after a little explanation, you may be infected with the same mania, for Captain Cleverty and yourself are very aptly fitted for playing the same game."

He bowed and said,

"Howard, I am to old for flattery."

"Aud, Johnson, I despise the flatterer. If we are to work together, you must never doubt me. I seldom jest, and never with any man's feelings. And if I see a doubt in his eye or demeanour, I silently avoid him."

Grasping my hand, he said, "Howard, we never will quarrel, but should you find me weak, you will wait for an explanation. I have not, like yourself, been confined to such a rigid school of morality—and my only fear is that your high sense of honour may be severely tried by our messmates."

"Fear not, Johnson. The man who seeks my acquaintance will find only one gate that is guarded; and if he ever takes a liberty, depend upon it, I must have committed myself. But, thanks for this caution. We may, between us, reform and humanize any troublesome customer. I have seen a revolution effected by one determined individual; and he was esteemed by the good, feared by the bad,

but disliked by none—and yet he was neither senior nor junior."

We found our party still enjoying themselves; and, as the captain and Johnson wished to go on board with me, we left them to manage their own affairs—retaining Mrs. Goude's rooms, who now ushered us into her pet apartments, and appointed select servants to attend solely on our establishment. The ladies were to await us on Mount Wise. The admiral had sent invitations, but, for the present, Ellen did not feel well enough to accept.

The *Granicus* lay in Barn Pool, and I was not sorry to find myself fairly on my legs, and by myself in my proper station.

The *Granicus* was no beauty, but still a handy vessel; and my messmates, as far as I could judge, a nice set of men—better, indeed, than I have generally seen huddled together; but Captain Cleverty would soon part with any troublesome members. He was too straightforward for any nonsense.

It was soon understood I was there for 'special service,' and it is astonishing how that small addition with the *Diana's* increased my comfort, I will call it— for many asserted I was only a commander in disguise.

However, the captain gave me a lift in his gig to Mount Wise, and accompanied me to call on the general, where I found the ladies awaiting me, and made the acquaintance of the very fascinating members of his family— increased, then, or at a later date, by one of my Halifax pet.

In the evening, I dressed, joined the captain, and made my first appearance at the admiral's. I now found, in his family, that he was another being, and the ladies were of a mould and manner very superior to the generality. One very beautiful girl was there; and, if my heart was in danger, then, perhaps, it might have quivered, had the cruel individual sped the fatal shaft. But I suppose she had some other object in her eye, for it played but flittingly on me. She was the

niece, I think, of Lady D——, the daughter of a colonel, whose name was familiar. Her mamma kept a bright eye upon us both. The captains of the squadron or fleet, and their ladies were present, and I enjoyed myself as much as lieutenants do at admiral's parties.

Latterly, the chief himself ranged up, and entered very familiarly into conversation, acquainting me that Lofty and Noble were his chicks, or had served with him; adding, "Nothing like a name, sir. Two such godfathers, backed, as I learn, by Lord St. Vincent, will push any fellow forward. But, without paying you more than your due, no fools ever got to windward of those men" Having poured in this broadside, he bore up, and was soon lost in some cozy nook; for he was very fond of the good things of this life, aad they induce a sleepy sensation.

Official routine engaged me during the following day, and I witnessed rather a ludicrous scene—but it brought volunteers of the former breed. It was a huge white flag, with '*Su-*

perb for Algiers,' accompanied by a band, and I think on a waggon, a number of smock-frocks, with hats adorned with the ship's name, with gold letters on blue ribbons, denoting 'the *take*' to have been rather successful.

The admiral had rather an eccentric neighbour—a baronet, formerly of the Jewish persuasion, and who gave me a curious invitation to shoot, should I ever return to that neighbourhood in the sporting season. It ran nearly thus:—

"Ah!—you like shooting—good shot?"

"Had very little practice, but a sort of sneaking regard for gunpowder,"

This set the rector laughing immoderately. However, the baronet continued—

"Well, you can shoot."

"Yes, if I see anything to fire at."

"But you will promise to shoot a rabbit—not—a hare?"

"Truly, my dear sir, I should fire at a sheep, if it rushed up as suddenly as a hare or rabbit. I am no professed sportsman; I

could not wait to determine the species or gender; I should fire."

"Indeed! Surely, you would not shoot a hen pheasant?"

"A hen pheasant!—why not? How should I know the difference?"

And now all hands joined in the laugh against me—the baronet exclaiming, "You, a sportsman!—I would not mind your firing at my best hat!"

"I promised, my dear sir, that I was no sportsman. But let me fire at your best hat at 800 yards with a main-deck gun, I think you would not find much of the animal fur remaining: that is the only practice I have had."

"Wheugh!" whistled Captain Cleverty.—"You are one of the *Diana's*—won't risk that."

CHAPTER XV.

Lord Exmouth collected his scattered forces and made his dispositions.

I was at-home in every ship. The followers of Lord Exmouth, of many North American heroes, and of the Channel fleet, all were congregated here in this great fleet, for great it was, taking its thorough composition, from the chief to the seaman. No such well-organized force passed the Strait of Gibraltar, for, although, I admit, they were green indeed when they quitted Plymouth Sound, and it was the month of July, 1827, still, they ripened before they passed Cape St. Vincent, and some ships

were smart enough to gratify even Lord Exmouth, and his noble captain, Sir J. B.; some, indeed, were prohibited from expending more shot, being considered effective in gunnery; and, aloft in the various evolutions, the new crews even beat the old, well-trained frigates. On the 9th of August we anchored.

I had my eye on the Dutch squadron, at Gibraltar, and there found the Dutch admiral, Van de Capellan, with five frigates, with which he volunteered to accompany Lord Exmouth. The gun-boats were selected from the Mole, where they had remained idle for years, and were easily equipped. I was not sorry to avoid such a command, particularly as I learned that vermin abounded. One was allotted to each ship-of-the-line—also one explosion vessel. A brig tender was also attached to each ship-of-the-line, to aid in towing in and out of action.

Each ship embarked as much ammunition as it was *possible* to stow, and now things appeared to assume more the shape of earnest.

Some of the frigates brought supplies of sheep, fruit, &c., from Tangier, bribes, I suppose, to give their *dear allies* such a dressing as they *heartily wished*, and the comforts for the sick, thanks to the foresight of our noble commander-in-chief, were adequate to his contemplated movement.

I have reason to know that Lord Exmouth's ideas on the subject of the mode of engagement, were those of Nelson, &c, but he did not omit to pay a just tribute to Captain Noble. Plans of Algiers were supplied to each captain, and great pains taken by his lordship, to endeavour to make them fully comprehend his meaning, I use these words advisedly, they were impressed on my recollection at a later date, by his lordship himself. From his determination he never wavered, so asserted Sir J. B., his flag-captain.

We sailed from Gibraltar, and as there are three versions of that action, in one version of which one captain was much interested, all I will say upon the subject, is, that Lord Exmouth,

when asked his opinion in England, simply bowed, and said—

"I highly approve of the dignified silence of Captain E., his name requires not newspaper applause, he was where he was ordered, no volunteer changed my orders, a compliment may be mistaken." This renders the controversy nothing more than a controversy for a superiority, and yet I believe the individual whose name was so freely used, cared little about it, and wanted not proofs of his valour, beyond simply "Algiers" inscribed on his already well-established "scutcheon."

But here we are on our journey. I had not heard of the names of the Dutch frigates, nor, indeed, felt much interest, until in my afternoon watch one day, I happened to be looking out on them to windward, fancying some accident, when I noticed that the two leading frigates with their top-sails on their caps, were laughing at the fleet.

Fitzalan, at the main-tack, was watching me like a hawk, and I saw, quite bursting with something, of which he wished to relieve himself.

I beckoned him—"Come, what is it, Fitzalan?"

"What is it? can't you see, sir?"

"Yes, I see, those two frigates are beating us all."

"Lord bless you, sir, Can't you see they are the saucy *Melampus* and *Diana?*"

What the effect on my feelings was, or how to explain it, I am unable to explain. It did then occur to me, that there were two of those names in the pendant list.

"But how do you know they are our old friends?"

"Why, sir, the Dutch sent an old rickety 'liner' into Plymouth, she was too rotten to repair, so they sold her, and bought those beauties. Does it not make your heart sore, to see any other colour on them, sir?"

"Well, perhaps it does, Fitzalan; but we may sometimes recognize a favourite horse in a stage coach, or a hackney coach, or a dock jarvie."

"All right, sir, you have made me easy;

they were not converted until they were no further use to us, and if we want them again, I 'spose we shall hire them, or take them without leave."

"Fitzalan, be very cautious how you make such remarks just now. They are our allies; and, coming with us just to learn how to fight, you should patronize them—lend a helping hand."

"Well, sir, so we will; and keep a sharp look, too, on the old craft — she shan't lose her character. I hope, sir, she will find a billet near us."

Just then the captain came up to blow before dinner, as the steward made the cabin unbearable when he began to prepare his table. He commenced—

"Well, Howard, I am afraid we never shall have a chance of trying this exercise of yours; but I shall dine with the admiral to-morrow, and ask to have a game of our own. Recollect, only five rounds from fourteen guns, the first available day."

"I really hope you will, sir—and that, if I should be allowed any berth in action, you will let me have a little confidential communication with you and Mr. Johnson."

"That is just what he has requested. We will, if it suits you. Do that to-night, after eight o'clock. The master shall look out for you, as it will be on duty. This will suit me particularly, as it may influence my object with the admiral, to-morrow."

"I am at your service, sir."

"But what were you about with Fitzalan? —if that is a fair question. He looks as if he had swallowed a bag of monkeys. What drollery is he up to?"

"Oh, nothing, sir! He has merely found out that the *Diana* and *Melampus* are in the squadron, and beating us all; and is very anxious we may be near each other, to hold up *Diana's* head, if she should be hard pressed."

"Capital! I will make a point of getting introduced to her captain, and telling him that we have the old hands aboard. And *Melampus*,

too! Poor Hawker!—how it would gladden your heart to see the old *Melampus*—'All wings—every rope in her taut as a crowbar—beating everything!"

"One would imagine, sir, that you had seen her in her glory, when she took that *Tamehamehah*."

"No, Howard; but I have heard so much about her doings, that I am glad to see that even in strange hands the strange stories are realized."

* * * *

At length the interesting day arrived; Captain Dashwood of the *Prometheus* had joined, having succeeded in smuggling off the wife, daughter, and infant of the consul by equipping the two former as 'middies.' Poor baby, however, squeaked in the basket and was captured with the surgeon, together with three *bonâ-fide* middies, and fourteen men, with two boats.

Here was an aggressive act! However, the Dey, not being such a '*Turk*' as he was painted,

as I afterwards learned, sent off the babe the day following. No historical view can be obtained from 'James.'

On the morning of the twenty-seventh of August, all was life and preparation. The *Severn*, with flag of truce flying towed in a boat from the admiral, demanding immediate compliance with terms. Before noon, the boat with flag of truce, was met by one from the shore; and Salamé asserted, that the captain of the port, to whom he afterwards introduced me in England, gave him to understand, "that they would not resist."

The admiral, thinking more about his men, signalled 'cooking and meals as usual.' Some who were wise took advantage of this notion, and materially benefited thereby. Some who had nobler souls, disdained anything less palatable than gunpowder broth. I was weak enough to participate in cold beef, cheese, and explosive porter! At two p.m. truce annulled, Admiral hoisted 'preparative'—the preconcerted signal. I cannot say that I saw any

ship hoist the affirmative, as James intimates. 'Ready,' would have been the only reply from a junior or inferior; but it so happened, if my intellect be not dimmed by age, that the '*preparative*' was repeated by every ship, designating 'ready.'

Lord Exmouth bore up, followed closely by *Superb*, until she was signalled, 'anchor instantly.' *Minden* next *Superb*, *Albion*, *Impregnable*.

Now just to exhibit the absurdity of the assumed historian of a naval battle, at page 578, we are informed—

First.—"The fleet bore up 'in the order *prescribed.*'"

Second.—He omits to say that they anchored *with a chain cable out of the stern port*!

At page 579.—"The *Impregnable* and *Albion* were to have taken their stations." But leave we the ships to fight their own battles.

The frigates had no places in action, but were to take up the gaps. And our captain soon found one to suit, running out his warps

to the very rocks under the muzzles of the enemy's guns; the saucy (very saucy, indeed), *Granicus* took up her position between the Flag and *Superb*, but with a sort of filial tenderness to the latter.

To say how we fought, I leave to the *Superb*, and we know how beautifully she did her work. How many shot were thrown away, the powder expended must tell; and there too, as to the relative proportions of powder to shot, the historian could have obtained satisfactory information.

Of the practice of steady, distinct firing, we must ask the poor unfortunate turbans, who so often deserted their ladles, falling headlong between the muzzles of their long guns, for they loaded, apparently, by loose powder, or by cartridge, placed in the chamber of the gun by ladle. Indeed, I never saw the shot put in! By this, our distance (of which we were afterwards informed was fifty-six yards), may easily be imagined. We suffered; but from some kind friend outside, we were pricked up

in a manner not agreeable to our gallant captain, and he sent him a bit of his mind.

. The tumble of the batteries—originally four beautifully symmetric tiers—the fall of the lighthouse and its works—soon presented a scene of destruction which scarce reminded one of such works; and the casemates, which still harassed us, were only distinguishable by the transmitted illumination, produced by the enemy's frigates, arsenal, and magazines, blazing and alternately exploding within the mole. We had little time for admiration or reflection, for our orders to select special mischievous guns, which dealt more deadly destruction towards the conclusion of the action, kept our attention painfully on the alert; and when at length the orders to haul out came, it was with a painful feeling that we did so, hoping to make terms only at the muzzles of our guns. I know not how it is, but this action seemed to excite me differently to any other; there was an absence of that vicious enthusiasm between ship and ship, we felt that our cause was

better, and still we felt that they were not a match for the wooden walls of old England.

About two o'clock, I think, we got anchored. But such a finale! Our enemy had been earthly, but now a power under which the firmest heart quails visited us. Crippled and exhausted, with light airs we had to tow out. Thunder, forked lightnings, and such a deluge of rain, as I never before or since witnessed, poured upon us—sight being almost taken away by the quick, succeeding flashes, which were painfully reflected on the water-deluged deck, which the scuppers were inadequate to relieve. Providentially this was unattended by wind, or that fine fleet would, before dawn, have been dismasted!

Who has had his ardour chilled—has found all his valour ooze out at his heels, as the torrent, pouring down the back of his neck by the laws of gravitation, and making a canal of his back, entered his shoes? Who Who has witnessed the fiery mastiff subdued by a garden engine, and run howling as if he

had been beaten? Let him extend his commiseration to the poor half-drowned combatants of the memorable 27th.

The 28th was beautifully serene. Certain ships prepared to renew action. Admiral signalled 'Admiral does not know whether;' but this was followed, not long after, by 'Peace is concluded between.'

And now each was anxious to inquire after friends. Our good—and, as he won his laurels here so magnificently, I call our noble—captain, went to the admiral. Well, I was there, too. I was much at home there, but I tell no tales. Our captain was received as he deserved. The captain of the *Diana*, who did his work well, and nobly supported the credit of the old craft, took our captain by both hands, and, looking him full in the face, said—"Ah! you are too great for me!" But his language was not so complimentary to others.

Our next visit was to the *Superb*. She had taken her hammering most patiently. Every-

thing about her was exhibited, in some mode, as a curiosity—the smallest lines cut in fragments—sails in shreds, and sides as if she had suffered from the small pox. But her gallant captain and first were on their beam ends—both wounded by a splinter; also the junior lieutenant.

The captain wished to see me, and received me in a manner the most kind and grateful to my feelings. One of my esteemed friends had joined one of the bombs; but the poor second-lieutenant seemed quite out of his element, in his new position of captain and first-lieutenant. I could compare him—good creature he was, too—only to a hen which, having hatched a brood of ducks, saw them take the water. Next we visited the *Impregnable*. Never shall I forget that scene! With her good captain I was intimate, and I had a very long conversation with him, touching matters of deep interest. We then proceeded to the "'tween decks"—the chamber of horrors. I never heard *then* of any shell from the enemy burst-

ing on board of any of our ships, as James states; but, by the explosion of a hanging magazine, no less than sixty were placed *hors de combat.* I went the round, and viewed many of the wounded. How many survived I never enquired; but many were without features, the face being covered with a piece of calico, in which the openings for eyes, nose, and mouth alone represented the features.

The *Albion* and *Minden* succeeded, the captain of the latter, an intimate friend. *Leander* I think, was the last, there I missed my old friend, the gallant captain of marines, Wilson. He had lost both lower limbs and died during the action. The lieutenant of marines, three middies, one a friend of mine, poor Glennie! had fallen.

Enough food for deep contemplation.

A day was set aside for public thaksgiving, and I went to hear a most eloquent discourse, by an esteemed friend, in one of the line of battle ships. He selected his text, most appropriately, for the 27th day of the month —the 1st verse of the 124th Psalm.

"If the Lord, Himself, had not been on our side, now may Israel say, if the Lord, Himself, had not been on our side, when men rose up against us."

This he treated very beautifully, gradually introducing the peculiar reference each verse had to our situation, as regarded the threats of the enemy. Of that sermon, many copies were made for personal friendship; and, I believe, the admiral and many others requested the same favour with the same result.

But in the plenitude of our satisfaction when every one thought that all had been done so well that nothing was needed but to rejoice and be thankful—the poor unfortunate *Granicus* was visited by an event which, I do believe, disgusted the entire squadron. I would conceal the matter, but that it contains the just punishment of over-weening pride and assumption of character which I leave in the breasts of the officers of the squadron. An unfortunate talebearer communicated to an officer, that two poor middies, in the freedom

of discussion, had alluded to the small share he took in the action.

This his magnanimous spirit could not brook. He complained to the admiral, who was as much disgusted with said officer as he was with said talebearer.

The kind advice of the admiral was not listened to. The only expedient was '*horresco referens.*' The poor middies had to make their apology, read in the ward-room of each ship in the squadron; thus promulgating their opinions—for as to apology, no officer would listen to it. The culprits, indeed, received attention! Did Lord Exmouth intend this?

And leaving *Prometheus* to take care of consul and family, charging my esteemed friend, Sir James Brisbane, with letters to my mother and Ellen, and a promise that he would see them, if in London, we winged our way for Gibraltar.

CHAPTER XVI.

I NOW began to be very tired of the service, and wished for repose—was paid off, and reached London. Shortly after my arrival there, I received a friendly detainer in the form of—

"MY DEAR MR. HOWARD,

"If it is not inconvenient to you, I should like to see you in London before you leave it.

"Yours faithfully,

"EXMOUTH."

I therefore had an interview with his lordship, in which every question relating to my

naval career was discussed; and I was honoured by a special introduction to the first and principal naval lords as his particular friend. Two knew me before.

The question of *how* I was to be promoted seemed, even then, to puzzle the great men; but I was informed that "I must hold myself ready for immediate service, and at once write a letter, tendering service."

This did not quite accord with my views, but what could I do? I wrote the letter, and soon packed off to Ashdown Vale. Noble and Charlotte joined us the evening before, and we had made up our minds for a little enjoyment on his Norfolk estate.

We had made all our arrangements, indeed, for an English tour of inspection, when Ellen, the personification of grief, approached with another of those ominous foolscap letters.

However, this time it merely appointed me as lieutenant of one of the guard ships at Plymouth, with a private note to join and ask for a month's leave to attend to urgent busi-

ness. This was to keep up my time. I reached Plymouth—saw the admiral—joined —took my own letter for leave to London, and thus gained five days.

We now quitted the rectory, Noble, Charlotte, Ellen and myself, with Louisa and Noble's servant, and reached Burnham Hall in two days' quiet travelling. As yet Noble had deferred the visit, until I should be present, and we found good Mr. Deedes rubbing his hands in great glee, and Mrs. Deedes in possession of the drawing-room, with a comfortable fire. I took his hand very warmly, and thanked him for this fresh proof of his kindness; his eye glistened, and he whispered, "No, my dear sir, you are the author of all this happiness," Mrs. Deedes received me with great warmth, embraced Charlotte, and a happier party never sat down to table.

Deedes was here by appointment, not expecting to meet me, and his wife had now taken it into her head, that he was not to be sneered at, and was becoming so domestic, that

she could not do without him, and was quite sure "she should not intrude." So here she was.

After dinner, Noble was "read in," and asked if he intended to assume the name of Brenton, as if certain litigated estates fell in, one of us must hold the name. However, that he disliked, so it was postponed, as I could settle eventually on his issue, an event not long to be delayed.

Deedes having business of mine on the Brenton estates, I persuaded him to leave his wife with us, to which she was rather averse.

The news of the arrival of the captain and lady, soon brought the surrounding gentry to pay their visits, and a mighty pleasant circle they appeared to form. Several of the gentlemen inquired if he was fond of shooting, and remarked, that the Manor, particularly his own preserves, was completely overrun with game, Indeed, too much so, for a sportsman, it was almost as insipid as shooting fowls in a farm-yard, and as to rabbits, they were insuf-

ferably swarming. The water, too, had very large pike, carp, and tench, and there were several not insignificant trout streams for this part of England.

No one could comprehend his not being a Brenton; nor could they credit my putting down the name, nor my position at all. Ellen, unaccountably, was the great unknown; they knew her not, and yet they were so pointedly polite in their attentions, that I expected hourly to hear her called by some other name. Her features were certainly recognized, and she, cunning puss, knew the history of all the elder branches of the family. Many attempts were apparently made to recal her features, but she met them all with such perfect simplicity self-possession that they entirely failed. After they had gone, she exclaimed, "Well, I am so happy to be relieved, what prying creatures they are. How can it interest them to know me, it could not benefit them, and might frustrate some of my schemes in coming thus far."

This expedition, on her part, was, I found,

to the adjoining county—to the family estate of my grandfather, still a litigated question, and upon which this expatriated uncle had got some unaccountable lien, from being in possession of a family document belonging, of right, to my father. How he became possessed of it no one could tell, and, being abroad, the law could not make him reveal.

If this property was not transferred into our family, one of the '*over curious visitors*'—if neither of the great uncles appeared, or their wills—was likely to make a stir; hence the wonder "that no one represented the Brentons." Ellen comprehended this.

It now became important that I should not hastily change my name—nor indeed could I, legally, until I reached the age of twenty-five.

On the second day, at noon, we reached a very pretty pair of lodges, in the olden style of red brick, with mortar and flint nodule, pannelling and massive iron gates between. The lodge-keeper, a nice matronly woman, still possessing traces of beauty, came out, curtsied lowly to Ellen, and opened the gates.

Ellen enquired—"Who resides here at present?"

"No one, madam; but two strangers have arrived—one is from Mr. Horatio Howard Brenton, madam," curtsying.

Ellen bowed. "Drive on," uttered nervously, displayed her anxiety—and forward the postboy pushed. All were silent. The grounds were very extensive, or the road had been made as serpentine as possible to convey the impression, of a long drive, as clump after clump of thick underwood was passed—presently a fine sheet of of water showed its glassy expanse, and then the mansion—not large, but sufficient for a private family of good income, and very subtantially built of freestone, presented its double flight of steps, with portico rather—I thought—out of proportion.

As w edrove up, two carriages wee noticed—one was that of Deedes; the other had four horses, which appeared not to have been spared:—they were still panting hard.

Deedes met us at the upper landing in astonishment. "Miss Ellen Percy!" he exclaimed, in a tone which seemed to relieve him from a load of uneasiness. "What on earth could have directed you here? Have *you* any letters?"

"No," she said, with great composure. "May I ask who is this stranger," who had advanced towards her?

He observed—"Surely, I heard the name of Ellen Percy pronounced! Can that lady be found?"

She curtsied gracefully, and said—"She stands before you, sir, in the cold hall of this mansion, sir. But she will be glad to know your pleasure in any room that has a fire."

This the servants had prepared; and, taking my arm, she was conducted to a chair; motioning the stranger to be seated, to the astonishment of all, she said—"Now, sir, if you please, the lady who holds these possessions in trust requests to know if she can afford you any assistance?"

"Are you, madam, Miss Ellen Percy, or

the lady, in law, known by that appellation? whatever may be your true one? and do you hold these estates in right of my brother Horatio Howard Brenton?"

"I do hold these estates, in law, for the person of the late Horatio Howard Brenton still in trust for his legal heir, now of age, Horatio Howard Brenton, now before you—(presenting me,) and you are, I presume, truly a brother of his grandfather?"

"How, madam, can I convince you?"

"Oh! that is very easy, if these gentlemen retire."

We did so; and, as she informed me, they were mutually known to each other by documents, and by the great-uncle disclosing a family secret, known only to Ellen and those two uncles.

On being re-called, I was greeted as nephew, and assured that I possessed but one great-uncle; his brother died childless, in India, and left him the property, which would, with his, in fitting time, with these estates, fall to

me. "Indeed, your grandfather's estates will naturally, by my deed declaring you the heir, devolve on you when you attain, as I learn from this lady, the age of twenty-five; until then they are hers in law; nor can any power disturb her. Your mother's brother's case—I will not call him your uncle—I intend to relieve you of; and if the deeds are not forthcoming, I will attach him as a felon: my emissaries have him already on the continent—he had better not struggle. But, my dear, where is your mother? I should wish to see her. My uncle seemed very proud of Charlotte; seated himself by her; and, pulling out from his breast a locket, said—"How much she resembles her grandmother?"

Turning to me he said—

"It is well, young fellow, that you met me first, I should have given all to your sister. But my word is like that of my brother's, never cancelled, even cruel as it was, to your good father."

"Well, sir," I observed, "these estates I have already given to Charlotte, and her chil-

dren will inherit some, if not all the others; that depends on chances."

He was about to say something in reply, but Ellen's forefinger (termed by us her wand) was up, and he, smiling, said—

"Why, what a happy old boy you are making me if——"

Up went the wand again.

"Well, I will finish it my own way; I feel quite safe, I shall make you my banker, Horatio, and allow you to dispense all the Brenton honours unless——"

Up went the wand; and dinner being announced, everyone rushed to set themselves to rights. Louisa whispering—"Ready, but not on table," glided off to take care of my uncle.

I had almost dreaded finding an uncle, but this was one of the genuine breed, an affectionate grand-uncle, whose very heart was overflowing with the warmest ebullitions of affection, and almost as boyish in his degree as Noble. It would not have surprised me greatly had they commenced leap-frog. I am

sure he would have gone over more lightly than Noble, who was now assuming something of a portly aspect.

The next morning was fixed for shooting; some of the neighbours called, bringing dogs, with which we were not provided, and my beautiful Egg, was, for the first time, used against English game.

I found, ignorant as I had imagined myself to be, as a professed sportsman, that I killed much in the same proportion as those about me; and before noon, we had bagged more than was convenient to the men to carry. We returned, therefore, to luncheon. Ellen set her eyes very maliciously on one of the visitors, and at the same moment said—

"Will you be kind enough to ask Mr. *Oliver Brenton* to pass me that crust near him."

If a gun had gone off under his ear, it could hardly have startled him more. He stammered—

"Where, madam?"

"Here," said the old gentleman, handing him the fork on which the crust was.

His appetite failed; he suddenly felt indisposed; went home, and we never saw him again.

After they had all gone, Ellen observed—

"That shot, Horatio, was as you would say, well-aimed. I have released you of a very troublesome enemy. The name of Oliver Brenton, crushed all his hopes of succeeding to the Brenton estates."

My uncle drily observed, "Well, that was taking the bread out of his mouth, did you contemplate that, Miss Ellen, when you asked for it?"

"I did, sir, but I wanted the bread. It had no connection with my thoughts. I determined, at once, to crush his hopes and deter him from mischief or becoming acquainted with family secrets through his dogs."

"You are a general too, I perceive."—Up went the wand.

In a week Deedes returned with a much pleasanter countenance, and rejoiced his wife

was to have some one to play with, for our affairs had almost made us tame company. He had succeeded completely westerly and he was now about to try easterly, but we persuaded him to stay aweek for his wife's comfort.

My uncle too observed, "On plea of business you cannot depart, for I have patiently been awaiting you here."

"Oh! sir, only satisfy my conscience that I am detained on business and a feather will keep me."

My uncle put on one of his incredibly ludicrous smiles and mimicking "conscience! conscience! conscience!" with a cough left the room, Deedes, himself, laughing heartily.

On his return, he brought a small packet sealed and secured in waxed cloth, with sundry turns of red tape, and sitting down beside Ellen—addressed her.

"As you will not be general will you be amiable enough to act as secretary?"

"That I will with delight!" she exclaimed, "in a good cause!"

"Oh! that I can only suspect to be good until you let us know by the result of the papers herein contained."

The first was directed "To Captain Noble, late first-lieutenant with Captain Lofty in the *Cleopatra*."

"That's me."

"Stop a bit," said my uncle; "all in good time. It is not sealed, and is to be delivered to you after sufficient proof."

"Here are certain queries. First had you an uncle on your mother's side called Moreton?"

"I had."

"Is Mrs. Moreton, your aunt, living?"

"She is not."

"Did she die in this country, childless?"

"She did."

"On proof of these matters simply, the paper addressed to Captain Noble is to be submitted to his legal adviser, who is empowered, it having been duly signed, in the presence of witnesses, by the said captain, to

take out letters of administration as the legal heir, by will registered of the said uncle, Henry Moreton." The paper having been handed to captain Noble, was read by him and going to the table with Mr. Deedes, he presented him his true and lawful attorney, signed the document, and delivered it as his act and deed, to which we attached our signatures, when my uncle taking him by the hand, said, "I am afraid you will have to resign the Brenton estates, for your own interests will compel you to take the name of Moreton, but the word 'only'—is not inserted, perhaps, Mr. Deedes, our prisoner, here, will inform us whether my idea is correct. I think, after he reads this copy of the will, which entitles you to £200,000, that you may call yourself Moreton Noble or Noble Moreton, whichever you prefer. But as regards your issue, they may hold Brenton estates, if they will assume that name in addition. That is the affair of the lord of the manor there."

Mr. Deedes was sure it required no opinion

that Captain Noble must take Moreton, before or after, but that was optional.

In his droll manner he decided instantly. "Bah! none of your laughing at me. Do you think I would stand any fellow calling me Noble Moreton, Eh! Horatio! No! no! Moreton Noble sounds better. What say you, Charlotte?"

"Why, do you think I would let you know, *now*, if I did not think as you do? But I read Moreton Noble in your eye before my uncle had finished his part of the game, for it is a game, it is only one of my uncle's jokes; I can see there are no parchments there—no will."

Deedes made a very low bow. "Madam, these are only copies, to enable me to obtain the deeds, which will complete the transaction. The documents come from India, and are as valid for our object, as a rhinoceros hide. We will very soon produce a whitish sheep's skin, if it is preferred. But if I mistake not, this will be a very clean transaction, and Captain Moreton Noble will merely have to invest his money

in good securities, paying the customary crown fees for robbing a dead man of his name. This is not a troublesome estate business, it is funded property simply awaiting to be transferred to his new name.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he concluded, "let me here proclaim Captain Moreton Noble the heir to the estates of his uncle," and he shook the captain by the hand, who returning his pressure energetically, caused the lawyer to weep, rather, I suspect, from the vice by which he found his fingers compressed.

Ellen looked at my uncle with an enquiring air, but he said, "No, no more at present, unless you ——." Up went her wand, and peace was proclaimed.

We all congratulated the heir, but with very changed feelings, for I knew full well he would not now hear of any addition to his family wealth, until I married, and he saw the result.

How strange this peculiar accumulation of family wealth. It is true, that I never was absolutely penniless, unless I committed my-

self. Had Ellen died, who would have watched over my youth—who would have warned me of the fatal effect even of a sham duel?—avarice, villany, or even carelessness might have made me a dupe—an easy dupe—to my mother's brother: he would have triumphed, and I and my sister, perhaps, have ended our lives in miserable dependence.

It has been my lot to witness no less than three individuals disinherited for duelling; they were without principle—one ruined, because he did not fight, because he could never find a second—and that so preyed on his mind, that he rushed to destruction. Two forgers, because they could not keep up their expenses, and yet cut off from all hope, before they could succeed to their estates; and yet, if I am asked do I pity them, it is hard to answer. All I will say, each was unprincipled, each had to thank himself or his early education for deceit, or for failure in veracity. One poor creature I did pity: he fell from timidity; his first fault was a mere fib. He did at once

confess to *me*, and cried bitterly. He promised to reveal all at once, and ask forgiveness. But he met a demon, who dried his tears, took him under his protection, declared him an ill-used boy, and told the *covering falsehood for him!* That night he returned to me, cried bitterly, and told me all, and that I was threatened with vengeance and destruction. I was not then with either of my captains; even had I been, I would scornfully have rejected any notice of the threat relating to myself. I advised him to quit the service; but, before he could extricate himself from the fangs of that monster, falsehood over falsehood had been fathered on him, which the terrified urchin could not refute, and he left with a blemished character! This case will not be recognized: all the parties are dead! But, parents! such a child was in no one point *fitted for the service.* Beware how you destroy your son to relieve you from expenses at home!

CHAPTER XVII.

[It has occurred to the Editor, that these letters, extracted from a mass of family documents, might aid the reader in comprehending Horatio Howard Brenton's narrative.]

FROM MISS FANNY HOWARD TO HER DEAR FRIEND, MISS ALICE MOWBRAY.

"My dear Alice,

"What would the world be to me if it were not for you? Do not—do not, I entreat you, be unfaithful to me now, for, indeed, I could not bear it! I have sat here, in my own room, with your letter in my hand,

all the afternoon, not reading it over and over again, as I used once to read your letters, but thinking how much changed you are from the time—the happy, happy time—when you thought I was always right, and loved this and hated that, just as I loved and hated. I know how foolish all that was, but I often shed bitter tears when I remember that it is all past.

"You appeal to my womanly pride! Good heavens! My pride! Why, Alice, if I might only be his slave, and he would acknowledge me as such, I would gladly kiss the very ground touched by his foot every day of my life. And yet I hate him, Alice!—I hate him! His pride, his moral coxcombry, his punctilious coolness, his impertinent assumptions that the lives of all around him are to be governed according to a certain set of ideas he has imbibed from—Bah! I need not tell you whence.

"You say that I write with violence that almost approaches vulgarity; that when you

compare my later letters with those earlier ones you have been so foolish as to keep, you are shocked at the change you can discover in them, and at their complete want of any religious fervour or even sentiment.

"Dear, dearest Alice! I sometimes burst into a flood of tears, and then I am religious for a little time, and pray to God. And sometimes I wander through our village churchyard of an evening, and fancy, for a moment, that I am religious, because the associations and deep stillness and solitude of the place affect my nerves. But otherwise; I am not at all religious now, *and I do not want to be!* I only want to be at rest, and to forget everything.

"Horatio has done this, and yet you say that he is not to blame!

"Oh! Alice, Alice! love and pity your wretched

"Fanny Howard."

* * * * *

FROM MISS FANNY HOWARD TO HER DEAR FRIEND, MISS ALICE MOWBRAY.

"My dear Alice,

"You say you find it impossible to arrive at any comprehension of the state of the household at Ashdown Vale, and I do not wonder at it—for I myself, who have formed a part of it all my life, am sometimes quite lost in astonishment at it.

"You are quite right in guessing that my father completely identifies himself with the present position of affairs, and that my mother secretly dislikes it. She has never expressed anything of the kind to me, but I often feel that her heart is talking to mine. My dear mother! I believe—I fear—that she knows how it is with me, aud pities me day and night.

"As you begged of me, in the name of our friendship, to cease from hating that Ellen Percy, I have lately attempted to do so. I have made myself her constant companion, scarcely leaving her a moment; I am her

secretary, and assist her in the execution of all her plans; and keep myself quiet fifty times a-day, by telling myself that she has been like a mother to Horatio, and that Horatio loves her, and that I ought to be true to my own heart, and love everything that he loves. But there is one thing! If she dares —— (This was crossed out.)

"You ask if he ever pays me any of those attentions now, of which I used to boast so much when you and I were girls and playmates; and, if he do, how I receive them. I can scarcely describe to you the terms on which we appear to be with each other, but they more nearly resemble those which commonly exist between guardian and ward than anything else. He seems to think that he is bound to atone for having made my life a curse, by exercising an intolerable surveillance over my thoughts and actions. And, oh! Alice, he has sometimes—I feel, at this moment, as though I could murder them both! —dared to talk with Ellen Percy about what

they call my 'future settlement in life,' and even to discuss whom it would be best for me to marry! And I bear this, and you say I have no patience!

"Of course, I understand your enquiry respecting the curate, Fitzjames, notwithstanding the cleverness and appearance of indifference with which it is put. I am watching him, at present, as I would some curious animal; but I must see more clearly what position he takes with respect to this wonderful Ellen Percy, before I permit myself to communicate my opinion.

"Always yours,

"FANNY HOWARD."

FROM MISS FANNY HOWARD TO HER DEAR FRIEND, MISS ALICE MOWBRAY.

"I do not suppose I shall be able to finish this letter, Alice, or that you will ever receive it; and I only sit down to write it in the same spirit as that in which one sometimes waywardly touches a wound, to test its uttermost

anguish. You know the little wood coppice, which runs from behind the left wing of the rectory, down to the three-acre field, and how, when the sun-light brings out the vivid green of the underwood, and the quaint outlines of the gnarled stems, it resembles some old mediæval landscape? Well, I was sitting in the house-keeper's room, engaged in no more laborious occupation than that of watching the rooks tear up the yellow crowsfoot beneath the window, when I saw the curate come down the little golden thread of a path through the coppice, and adding to the natural ungainliness of his appearance, by showing a consciousness in every movement that some one was watching him. I confess that I stared somewhat rudely, for I was fascinated by the man's uncouthness, and the strong dislike I felt for him, from the first moment we ever met. At length he crossed the stile, and disappeared into the road, and I felt as though I had been suddenly relieved from the weight of an impending calamity.

"I never felt so glad to be alone as I did at that moment, it seemed to me as though I tasted the very joy of solitude, and I longed for a deeper draught of it. I should have been glad to know that there were no living beings within miles of me; I should have been glad if the birds had all fallen asleep and dreamed their songs instead of singing them, and the windmill ceased the slow waving of its arms on the distant hill. I wanted utter solitude, and utter silence! What then was my horror, when the person I most hated in the world entered the room, and began that kind of conversation of which I bear the greatest dislike, and which can be called neither bubble, nor gossip, nor prattle, nor anything else but 'language;' there is no soul or heart in it, not even a bad heart or a bad soul. Well, I was too indignant even to show my indignation, and I permitted him to sit beside me, and to pour forth his usual flood of impertinent admiration. At length he began to speak of Horatio, and I blushed deeply, from no other

feeling than anger, but he chose to put on a meaning look, and went on. I have no patience to tell you all that he said, but he spoke of some Rosa, whom Horatio had fallen deeply in love with, at Halifax, and was still in love with, 'almost unto death.' I could not help starting, and gazing at the man full in the face, and he went on, hinting at mysterious obstacles in the way of his marrying any girl but one, and that his despising these obstacles, would bring him to the utmost ruin. As I had began to listen to the man's narrative, I was forced, by my very want of interest in it, to listen calmly, longing all the time that an earthquake would disturb it. At length he changed his tone, and began to express his admiration of Miss Fanny Howard. I was willing to excite my dislike to the man to the utmost, and led him on. From growing warm he grew confidential and hopeful, and favoured me with some of his expectations, should I join my lot to his. This was the point to which I wished to bring him, and I now dis-

covered that (as indeed I had long expected) that Horatio Howard Brenton and Ellen Percy had quietly arranged together, (oh, Alice! pray that I may have patience) that I was to marry this wretch! this reptile! and that the gift of my worthy self was to be rendered a little more acceptable, by being accompanied by the presentation of some living on my patron's estate.

"My pen drops from my fingers, Alice.

"FANNY HOWARD."

CHAPTER XVIII.

When three weeks had flown by—and very rapid was their flight—we moved off to Ashdown Vale, to present my uncle to my mother. When we approached the rectory, Ellen requested to see my mother before my uncle was introduced; so, giving her time to abstract her from the room, we loitered at the carriage, when old Hardy, catching the side-view, exclaimed—"Surely, I cannot be deceived, Mr. Oliver?"

"No, my old friend, you are not, and you are another tie to keep me on earth; and where is your daughter?"

"Before you, sir!"

He kissed Louisa as if she had been his own child. The poor woman was somewhat flustered, smoothed her feathers, and asked—

"Pray, what have I done that I am to be kissed in this way, sir? Sir, father and Mr. Horatio, both of you, ought to be ashamed of yourselves!" and off she scampered.

The rector led my uncle into his study, and they had it all to themselves there; and as these matters are not pleasant to lookers-on, I left the meeting with the ladies to the rector and Ellen, betaking myself to my room, where I was again assailed by Louisa, for letting my uncle kiss her before all the servants, and the post-boys—that was the crowning sin.

"And why, sir, did you not let me know all this at your sister's? I would not have minded so much, there, sir—there, where no tell-tales, gadabouts, &c. But the post-boys, sir—oh!" and she burst out again.

"Well, the only way I see, is to take the kisses back from your hands."

This sent her away satisfied. I did not come down untill dinner-time, for I had many letters to answer; one in particular, from Captain Lofty, informing me that he had been offered a command for Algiers, but had declined, and asking me for "a full and complete record of the action from your own notes—nothing hearsay; but every thing you *know*—even of the *squabbles*—for it is important—but nothing *hearsay*. It may do *good*. You know me to well to suppose I ask this from idle curiosity. I may possibly see you at Plymouth, all well."

When I reached the drawing-room, peace prevailed, and my uncle was seated between my mother and aunt, quite at home. They rose, and went through the customary ceremonies, and all was quiet again. The curate soon joined, and appeared delighted to meet me. His brother had gone to join a ship on the West India station, where he expected promotion and freight. He hinted that it was not improbable that I became his

first-lieutenant. I did not say no, but I thought it *very improbable.* Indeed, I found that the curate had somehow assumed such an intimacy and confidence about my affairs, that he became troublesome, particularly on political grounds, assuring me of a vast number of votes which he had secured for me when I presented myself as the candidate as the representative for ———

To cut this matter very short, I assured him that his labour had unfortunately been in vain—that I had no interest or intention to reside in this county—intended to steer clear of politics, and would probably leave England within a few months.

"But, sir, what will Sir Charles Harrison think of this?"

"Think!" I repeated—"I never dream of the thoughts of others, as regards my movements."

"Why, sir, he reckons upon you as an ally, as a tower of strength."

"I regret it."

"I am, sir, authorized by him to act in this matter."

"Beware, then, you do not commit me or yourself, for most assuredly I will not be drawn into any political meshes. I must instruct my solicitor on this matter."

"But, my brother's interests, sir?"

"Your brother belongs to an honourable profession—let him look to it."

As the conversation was becoming painful, Ellen asked me a question which I thought required a private answer; and, therefore, shifting my position to the chair beside her, I left the rector and curate to fight it out, for which the rector was evidently prepared.

"I am so glad," she exclaimed "to see you kept your temper. Promise me to take very little wine, and I will send a note to you to give you an early excuse for avoiding after-dinner discussion.

"How fearfully hideous and disgusting is the pastor converted into a political partizan! Here is a brand among us—so much for grati-

tude in asking Sir Charles Harrison to aid his brother in getting a ship. It is plain to the meanest capacity that they have played a game to entrap me; and, if so, they shall be disappointed; I will remove our friend to a better living, near Burnham Hall, and put my old schoolmaster in here."

"Why, that has been my idea, if we can persuade the rector to consent."

"That, Ellen, must be your part."

Before we went into dinner, Ellen whispered to my uncle—

"Stop politics."

The dinner was damped; every cover seemed to disclose something which smelt politically—even the game tasted of game laws, poachers, &c.

After dinner it was nearly as bad. The ladies retired, and just as the curate thought to renew the action, my uncle beckoned, and I bore up, and took my seat between him and the rector. The curate could only follow motion by taking up his position on the

opposite side, and on the right of the rector.

Old family matters were discussed, and my Uncle Oliver observed—

"How is it Horatio does not remove you to a better living? If he does not, I will, before he takes the power from me. We have many better. Come, sir, speak."

"Well," I observed, "that is a subject for ourselves. I have suggested that connected with Burnham Hall. Ellen likes it, and we have only to obtain the consent here. My old schoolmaster will fill one or the other."

The rector replied—

"Well, Horatio, you know me too well—anything near your residence—there I shall die happy."

"Oh! I have made my mind up for Yorkshire or Norfolk; but you will find me mostly in Norfolk, I suspect, if not at sea."

The curate observed—

"Surely you will consult Sir Charles!"

"Certainly not! nor even intimate to him any intention of mine."

My uncle, in his dry, sarcastic manner—

"And why, sir? I have not the honour of knowing of Sir Charles Harrison; he is not, to my knowledge, related to our family, and I should consider him, not having family reasons, very presumptuous and impertinent to breathe his sentiments upon this matter."

"But, sir, I beg pardon. I think Sir Charles is interested in the successor to the rectorship."

My uncle curtly observed—

"I hope so, as I understand that Horatio's old schoolmaster is a very fit and proper person to inculcate every moral and honourable principle."

As the servant entered with the note, my uncle added—

"Ah! just in time; we must settle this with the ladies"—and we retired.

On breathing freely in the drawing-room, it was agreed, *nem. con.*, that this party adjourn to London forthwith—That the rectorship connected with Burnham Hall be duly con-

ferred on Dr. Howard, he resigning to my old schoolmaster.

In the course of the next day, I was about to write fully to Fitzjames, and tell him my mind, as I could not suffer myself to be in doubt about our future acquaintance; when the servant brought up a note, which, on opening, ran thus:—

"DEAR SIR,—

"I have just left the Rev. Mr. Fitzjames, and would wish to see you, in order, if possible, to smooth matters between you. Can you appoint a meeting?

"Yours, &c.,

"CHARLES HARRISON."

We were all naturally indignant at this attempt at interference by Sir Charles; but Ellen said—

"We know nothing yet of Sir Charles; he may be as grossly blinded as ourselves, and *entre nous*, I am informed that this man is paying his addresses—if not accepted—to a

daughter of Sir Charles. It may save much misery to see Sir Charles. Now, as you belligerent gentlemen, to whom we humble maids of England look up with confidence for protection in the hour of need, consider it beneath you to hear poor Sir Charles tell his story; let me assume, *pro tem.*, the championship for the other sex. He will not call me out; his passions, if he has any, will be subdued, and he may simply hint to me what he might be induced, ostentatiously, to demand from a man."

Her idea was considered good. She was known to be legally the person to whom this affair belonged; and, upon the face of the transaction, if hostile (*fas est ab hoste doceri*), she therefore wrote an additional note, stating that as she was the legal representative, until I proceeded as a Brenton—which I could do at any moment—she must forbid any interview in the matter in question. But if it suited Sir Charles, she should be very happy to see him in London, respecting the matter in question.

CHAPTER XIX.

By a somewhat free expenditure of money, we were soon comfortably settled in London, in a house in Grosvenor Square; and it was there that the projected interview between Ellen and Sir Charles took place, leading to a completely amicable understanding.

I made, of course, an early call at the Admiralty, and as Sir Charles wished to make a better acquaintance with the first-lord and the naval worthies, he requested to be allowed to accompany me.

"I know the waiting-room well enough, Horatio, and can keep out of your way until I am called."

I first called on my friend, who carried me on to the senior; and he then told me, that as my absence on law affairs required my vacancy to be filled up, I had been superseded, and the first-lord, as he would himself inform me, had promoted me on half-pay, 'contrary however to my ideas,' bowing.

I observed that Sir Charles Harrison was anxious to make his acquaintance, when he inquired for what object.

"None that I know, Sir George, but as being an influential government member."

"Oh! indeed; he is not waiting, is he?"

"He is, sir," and turning to my friend I said—"he is anxious to see you too, sir."

So the bell rang violently, and Sir Charles was ushered in. He was very politely received, and requested to sit. But he excused himself on the ground that time was valuable to all parties, and that he could explain himself easier 'on his legs'—smiling, as did the others. He commenced—

"My young friend here is, I find, to be

promoted; the reasons possibly may not just now be revealed by Lord C——, but when it may be convenient, I would be glad to converse on that subject confidentially, as the accredited friend of Lord C——. But my present object is, as this gentleman is here to see the first-lord, that you would be kind enough to intimate to his lordship, that I would much wish to see him upon matters officially connected with the interview."

"His lordship is fully prepared for my visit."

"That Sir Charles would, I think, be better managed without my interference, but we will see further."

We rang the bell as the messenger appeared.

"Tell the private-secretary I wish to see him."

He entered.

Introducing Sir Charles, he said—

"Here is Mr. Howard to see his lordship by appointment, perhaps, you would hint to his

lordship, that Sir Charles also wishes to see him."

"Exactly, I understand, his lordship expects Sir Charles."

Sir George shaking him by the hand, said—

"Very glad, Sir Charles, to make your acquaintance; and glad to see you in my house below, whenever it suits your convenience before eleven, or after two, we are only in stables here."

The secretary now inducted us to the first-lord and retired. We took our seats opposite to his lordship on the side of the fire. It is, I believe, customary for the first lord to open the business by some leading matter. He did so.

"I am happy, Mr. Howard, that we have now a good plea for your promotion. You have, it appears, exhibited some claim by Lord Exmouth's report, not for separate valour, because no chance offered, but, as your captain explained, for peculiar discipline and ability beyond the ordinary course, and a

steadiness and model of secrecy ;—not forgotten when your services may be required. Your present conduct meets also with approbation, and your preferment now may stop any idle tongue hereafter. Your commission, sir, simply awaits the form of office, and you can take it home with you. At present, avoid the Admiralty ; when these affairs have blown over and it suits your views, it is the opinion of my distinguished naval colleagues, that you should not remain idle. But come not here. Sir Charles will see to your interests, and you will hear from me."

Shaking me by the hand, he said, " I wish to see Sir Charles alone."

Retiring, I visited my good friend and patron, and he, having signed my commission, sent me down to the chief clerk, telling me I was too great a stranger at Whitehall. I then told him the first lord's advice ; he frowned as none but he could frown, and I dropped down the stairs like a monkey, into the chief clerk's room.

"Well, Horatio, I give you joy, my good boy. I have your bit of parchment, and here is your letter, you had better take it, too."

"Will you do me a favour?" I asked. "Certainly." "Then let that ominous letter be sent to Grosvenor Square, to-night, at six, with plenty of wax, and the largest seal you have! *make it ominous.*"

"Very good, I think I understand you. You do not mind the *size?*"

"Oh no, the larger the better."

We shook hands, I visited the round, and got home.

Noble was still absent, and I feared might not arrive in time for dinner. I waylaid Sir Charles, and imposed secrecy, even to movements of countenance. To-night was to be a full dinner of the happy family.

I first enlisted Louisa and her father, called them into my study and schooled them.

"Let me see! we have twelve, the round dozen,—in case of accidents, there should be two spare shots. Bring a waiter for fourteen glasses of champagne, and the glasses."

Louisa looked very inquisitive.

"Well, I see you are looking out for my uncle's wines to be taken off your hands, but it won't do."

"How tiresome you are. Father, do keep him quiet."

"No, Louisa! ask the post-boy."

"Well, come along, Louisa, look here. Can you keep a secret? Read that."

Giving her the parchment, and her arms were around my neck. The father said—

"Here are the post-boys."

She minded not.

At length—"Well! what part am I to play," handing the commission to her father to read, who exclaimed—

"Thank God then you *will* stay with us, Captain Horatio!"

"Now, Louisa and Hardy, mark me—about six o'clock the postman, or some other individual, will bring a letter, that is not to be delivered to me until Captain Noble calls for champagne, you will then, Louisa, if

you are not afraid to expose your few grey hairs (no one will see them) by pulling off your cap, bring in this waiter with this parchment as a mat; and having in Hebe style given each person their glass, finish at Captain Noble, who will then read the commission."

"Yes, sir; but (curtsying), pray, sir, who is Hebe—no bad one, I hope?"

"Oh, no, Louisa; she is cup-bearer to the gods."

"I will break every glass, if you go on that way, Mr. Horatio. Pray, father, tell him, now he is a captain, he must get sedate."

I next encountered Ellen.

"Well, Ellen, this is to be a gay evening; you are to give us a very best dinnner, in compliment to Sir Charles, and I hope will induce the ladies to make their toilettes in accordance."

"Well, then, as the doctor, and Mr. Deedes, and Noble will be late, I shall defer dinner one hour to prevent it being spoiled—that will afford time for embellishments. But how very

thoughtless of you, Horatio, to place me in such a dilemma!"

"Why, Ellen, it is simply clearing for action at midnight—well-regulated ships are always ready."

"Well, you shall have a ship's dinner, and it will be entirely your fault."

"Good! Ellen, ships' dinners are not so bad when we have such affectionate hearts to provide them. But, here is Charlotte—the very angel I sought!" -giving her my arm. "Come along, and tell me all the secrets."

"I have no secrets, Horatio; but I must retort—Where have you sent my husband, and when will he return? You have made this quite a ship of war. Go there, come here, is the only order understood."

"Well, Charlotte, I have now come to you in great anxiety, to learn at what hour Noble gave you reason to believe that you might expect his return."

"Why, Horatio, you are becoming quite legal or diplomatic. Well, I have reason to

believe that Captain Noble—my husband—your brother-in-law—intended that I should understand that he intended to return the moment that business on which he was engaged permitted, or, in fewer words—'Back, my love, to dinner.'"

The noise of a carriage and voice indicated his presence; he advanced to us—

"All right—quite complete! Hear all by-and-bye."

"Well, Noble, when you have finished all you have to tell Charlotte, I should wish to see you before you dress for dinner."

He soon joined me.

"Now, Horatio, what is in the wind?—for I see you are in better spirits."

"Well, that remains to be seen; but you are such a mad-cap, one cannot get you to play any part well."

"Trust me, and see if I cannot."

"'Needs must,' you know. I have no one else. Listen. Now, my appointment is expected to-night. If it comes, you will know

if all is right by my throwing the letter to you, when you will call out champagne. The servants will understand; and, as the last glass reaches you, turn up the mat and read. But mind, when you read the first, it is to the *Polly* — famous — as *lieutenant.* You comprehend?" And he punched my ribs.

"Well, if I were a commander, sir, I might resent it. Unfortunately, I cannot get over your head now."

"Yes," he replied, showing his ivory front, "No hope of that, Horatio, or I would bend my back for the leap. All the same; it is not probable that my pendant will ever fly again!"

"Nothing more probable, Noble, if good and true men are required."

He bowed—was silent, and retired to dress.

Another noise of wheels—fussy enquiries,—and two more strangers entered. The gentleman and lady were received by Hardy, and conducted up stairs—and all was silent. My establishment, for the present, was on this

floor; I therefore took no further notice, fancying it might be Mr. and Mrs. Deedes.

The party were assembled in the drawing-room, and awaiting the announcement of 'Dinner on table,' when a person, not at all clearly recognized, advanced, bowing and smiling. A rapid sound of welcomes, and the shaking of hands, with "Where have you come from?" in Noble's loud voice, told pretty clearly that Captain Lofty had arrived.

After the second course and just before the cheese, &c., I saw Louisa in the distance, holding the letter. I told Hardy to bring it, which he did with more than usual ceremony, taking care that Ellen should see it—for she now always took the head of the table, my mother being too delicate and absent. She exclaimed—

"Oh, Horatio! another of those ominous foolscaps. Do not read it now!"

Louisa now advanced—"Please, sir, the porter says it is *immediate*, and he must know you have read it."

"Well, tell him, all right;" and with a carving-knife, much to Ellen's horror, I cut the paper. "May I read?" I enquired.

"Oh, yes! who can prevent your *service?*"

I pitched it to Noble, and he read—

"SIR,

"I am commanded by their lordships to acquaint you that you are appointed to the *Polly*—infamous; and you are immediately to repair to the office for your appointment."

"Champagne."

"Well, tell the man I cannot go to-night."

Louisa and her father now advanced, and, filling the glasses, each person was prepared, Noble warning them that they must wait for him. At length, as he cleared his last glass off the tray, he turned up the parchment and said—

"By virtue of this document we will congratulate Commander Horatio Howard Brenton as the commander of the *Polly*—infamous—'for rank.' Ladies and gentlemen, that means '*on shore.*'

Such, gentle reader, is the form of 'wetting a commission,' on shore, of a commander or captain. There are other modes, but as I am not a promoter of noisy mirth, undue excess, or any drunken revels, I cannot describe it by those rules.

END OF VOL. II.

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